



THE
BEGGAR GIRL

AND

HER BENEFACTORS.

*Marcus Gage's Book, bought
at L. Bony,* IN THREE VOLUMES. *Dec-9*

1797

BY MRS. BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF WELCH HEIRESS, JUVENILE INDISCRETIONS,
AGNES DE COURCI, AND ELLEN COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWEL,

A poem, a drama, a novel, which represents virtue in lively colours, models the reader on the virtuous characters, who act without his perceiving it; they become interesting, and the author inculcates morality without seeming to mention it.

LE MERCIER.

VOL. III.

D U B L I N :

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THE

BEGGAR GIRL.

CHAP. I.

A French Milliner, and a libel on the fashionable ladies of Utopia.

MADAME LA CROIX lived in a fashionable street, at the polite end of the town, where her house, furniture and apartments were all, like herself, extremely handsome.—She received our heroine with the ease of an old acquaintance, and treated her with the politeness of a new one. She was indeed so much every thing to every body, that Rosa was ready to say with her patroness, “Madame La Croix is the best creature in the world.”

Madame’s stock in trade was disposed with great taste in a few glass cases, and the ladies who honoured her with their custom, lounged, with their friends, about every room in her elegant house. She kept a few smart work women, who however were seldom called on to assist in the sale of the tasty frippery they were employed to make, for Madame always waited on her customers herself.

The furniture, ornaments, and taste of the house, corresponded more with the beauty of the owner, than

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with the conveniences of her business; a certain air of something too exquisite for description, run through the whole, and indeed gave it more the appearance of a temple of luxury, than conveniences for trade.

Rosa had an opportunity of observing on the first day, that Madame's connections were of the highest rank. The carriages that stopped at her door were emblazoned with coronets, and so judicious were the attentions of the handsome milliner, that she often contrived to wait on the ladies and their friends in different apartments; a delicacy the more to be prized, as she had also the honour to supply men of fashion with Brussels point-lace, and other articles, for which indeed she had a great demand. Rosa, though charmed with Madame, amused by the variety of the well-fancied habiliments made in her house, and elated with hope of being soon settled in some or other of the high connections she daily saw, waited with great anxiety the arrival in town of Lady Gauntlet, and this impatience was not lessened, by finding herself an object of curious examination to some of Madame La Croix's customers, and many of her friends, to whom with the highest apparent good humour she introduced her.

Madame La Croix, though a native of Paris, spoke English fluently; she was notwithstanding very much pleased to find Rosa could converse with her in French; and one gentleman, rather past the meridian of life, who, whether friend or customer of the fair milliner, made it in his way to call several times in the course of the day, and always walk, without being announced, into the sitting parlour, gravely assured her she was a perfect paragon.

The second day of Rosa's residence in — street, she sent, under Madame's directions, a couple of chairmen into the city for her trunks, and received a note with them from the book-keeper, informing her he had a letter left with him, which he had engaged not to deliver but into her own hands; and requested to know when and where he might see her.

Rosa blushed;—one image always presented itself to her mind, on occasions like this, where imagination was left at large;—a letter! who but Montreville would

would write to her with such extreme caution; yes, it must be Montreville,—and her colour encreased.

Madame had the eye of a lynx; “You are always very charming, my little friend,” said she, “but that billet, ah what a lovely effect it has.”

Rosa blushed more deep.

“Oh Mademoiselle,” continued Madame, “you are a little rogue, I see that; there is a happy man in the world.”

Rosa was now alarmed; Madame would perhaps be questioned by her patrons, and should she suspect her of carrying on a private correspondence with a lover—heavens! how dreadful! such an idea must lower her in the estimation of a being so pure and prudent as Lady Gauntlet; nay, it was a suspicion she could not bear in the “best creature in the world;” she hesitated an answer, part an excuse for her confusion, and part denying the accusation.

Madame laughed it off as a joke, but believed it in down right earnest, and whispered it in confidence to the gentleman who honoured her with his frequent calls.

By the third day this gentleman was become part of the family, and Madame’s kindness to Rosa increased with his visits.

Saturday a handsome coach waited to take Madame and her spouse, for Madame had a spouse, though he was seldom seen or spoken of in the family, to their country villa, and Rosa was invited to be of their party.

As this was the first word she had heard of coach or villa, she was not prepared for the invitation. Lady Gauntlet was every hour expected in town; and as she employed herself in new modelling her old clothes, she hesitated about accepting it; but Madame would not be refused, and she must go in Madame’s coach to Madame’s villa.

The usage of other traders who keep houses in the country, was reversed in Madame’s establishments: the house where her trade was carried on, could vie in luxury and ornament with many of her quality customers.

Large mirrors, indulgent sofas, down cushions, curtains of the finest chintz, lined with rose-colour Persian,—and indeed all the furniture of the first taste and expence, decorated the apartments at her house in ——— street.

At the villa every thing was plain, convenient, and useful—but no more. “I must,” said Madame, “have air,—I must relax at least one day in the week.”

Rosa thought it very reasonable.

“And I must have a coach to carry me backwards and forwards, and to air when I am in the country.”

Rosa was happy she could command such conveniences; and so, reconciled to the villa and the coach, they would have sat down to ches, had not the constant visitor arrived and interrupted them.

The third day returned Madame, her spouse, and Rosa to town,—the constant visitor having left them the second day. During the ride Madame professed more kindness than ever for Rosa, and for the first time expressed a curiosity to know the nature of her dependence on the Countess of Gauntlet.

Rosa, with her usual frankness, confessed the very slight claims she had on the protection on which all her hopes depended, and was proceeding with a warm eulogy on the beautiful Countess, when Madame surprised her with a proposal, which could have no motive, she said, but the avowed one, of retaining an agreeable companion; this was for her to remain in ——— street, as her assistant, provided, however, Lady Gauntlet approved it.

Rosa had an inherent, and even to herself, on some occasions, an unaccountable pride about her: she was conscious that she had no resource but in her own industry and talents, and felt the strongest desire to exert them; but there was something in trade, in buying and selling to advantage, very retrograde to her feelings; and though Madame’s business was certainly transacted with great ease, and as it appeared, no less profit, she could not prevail on herself to accede to the proposal. Madame was evidently piqued, but had possibly her own reasons for dropping the subject, which she did without abating in attention to Rosa.

On

On their arrival in — street, she found, to her infinite joy, a card from Lady Gauntlet, appointing her to breakfast in Pall-Mall, the next morning.

After the first emotion of joy, Rosa felt an unaccountable weight at her heart; she was alternately elated by hope and depressed by fear; her all was at stake; her destiny seemed to hang on the next morning. She selected the best of the clothes she had been assisted to modernize by Madame La Croix's workwomen, laid them in readiness, took up a book, tried to read, to work, to draw, to write; all would not do; fear, or some other pre-sentiment, predominated over hope.—She recollected her friend John Brown: a week had near elapsed, and neither his presence, nor any tidings from him, confirmed the assurance of his parting looks. She wept for the first time under Madame La Croix's roof, and declined going down to supper with that lady and her constant visitor.

The next morning, having dressed with that taste and neatness which always distinguished her, she ordered a chair, and was carried to Pall-Mall before Madame La Croix was stirring.

Lady Gauntlet was an extraordinary instance of what women should be, and as extraordinary an instance of what they should not be: formed to attract, to engage, to enslave all eyes by her beauty, she had a mind well stored with all the fascinating *agrémens* that give soul to beauty, and render the hour of "sweet converse" more enchanting than the most luxurious tenderness; such was Lady Gauntlet to man: to woman, she was all smiles, all sweetness, all politeness, condescension and apparent innocent frankness; she could

—— "look like the innocent flower,
"But be the serpent under it."

She seemed rather to be solicited to share, than to lead dissipation; and was such an œconomist of time, or rather such a Machiavel in the distribution of it, that however late she retired to rest, she was at the hour of nine in her dressing room in the morning.

She received our heroine with one of those endearing smiles, which has cost many a wife her peace, and many an husband his honour ; and placing her by her side, enquired how she had passed her time with Mrs. La Croix.

Rosa was charmed with the kindness of her reception, and looked up to the Countess as a being of superior, if not celestial order ; overcome by grateful sensibility and respect, it was some moments before she could utter a syllable ; and when a little recovered, she raised her eyes ; they glanced on a picture that struck her speechless ; nor was this surprising,—it was Montreville ; his eyes, his commanding brow, his oval fine formed face, his handsome mouth,—nay it was—no, it was not himself—not so young—so full of health, of animation ; nor was the character of the face so expressive of candour and benevolence, but the likeness so true, that Rosa was near fainting.

Lady Gauntlet was all attention ; she rung for her woman ; water and drops were brought.

Rosa revived ; she ventured a second glance at the picture, thought it less like, and after a third, could both apologize for her behaviour and thank her charming protectress.

As Rosa was as beautiful as her ladyship, and as she had in her mind and manner all which that lady so well affected, nature designed them congenial spirits ; and it was as natural for the Countess to be pleased with a real display of the graces she assumed, as it was for Rosa to look up with a sort of humble admiration to a woman of such high rank, so lovely, and so eminently accomplished, who at the same time possessed such feeling and sensibility.

Lady Gauntlet was gazing with silent wonder on a young creature so much an object for temptation, and yet so fortified to resist it, and Rosa kissing her hand with the most respectful order, when a lady entered, unannounced, and flew to embrace the Countess.

Lady Gauntlet directed a glance at Rosa, which had a particular meaning, as she presented her ; and the stranger, after examining her like a critic in the human face

face divine, exclaimed, "She is very handsome! pray who is she?"

Lady Gauntlet was never at "a fault,"—"She is," said she, "a young person whom I am anxious to place in some very regular family, as companion or governess. She is very accomplished, sings charmingly, dances well, writes quick and free, well born and better educated."

And how, asks our fastidious reader, could Lady Gauntlet possibly tell how charmingly Rosa sung, how finely she danced, or how freely she wrote? did the vain thing introduce these mighty matters into the history of her misfortunes?

No.

Then why did Lady Gauntlet assert what she did not know?

It was the habit to which her ladyship accustomed herself, when she had a point to carry, in which case her melodious voice, smooth periods and courtly phrases, were never shackled, by a strict regard to truth.

Mrs. Woudbe, the lady who ran to her ladyship's embrace, was one of that description of people, who are cyleded quality binding. Mrs. Woudbe had undoubtedly a father and mother, at some period or other of her existence, but having the good fortune to attract the regard of a very rich man, she became his wife, and the rage of the bucks of the day, without any body troubling themselves to trace her family or education, which truth to say, would have cost some labour.

Mr. Woudbe, the lucky son of a more lucky father, who had the common good fortune to drive his own set of bright bays, while the unthinking prodigal, to whom he was steward, saw his paternal acres go to the hammer, was rich enough to please his fancy in a wife; that wife so pleased half the town, that like Lord Gauntlet, the first characters took him by the hand. Proud of the honour conferred on him by nobles of the land, he suffered his pretty wife to entertain, and be entertained like a princess, at the same time protesting to his friends, and declaring to herself, that if once he had reason to suppose her capable of

injuring him in the tender point, he would turn her out of doors without a shift; and very happy it was for the pretty wife, that detection did not follow offence, otherwise not even the gods can tell how often poor Mrs. Woudbe would have been turned out shiftless.

While the bud of beauty bloomed, nay even while the rose was full blown, the nobles continued to visit the lady, and take the husband by the hand; during which period, whatever excess or caprice distinguished the first belles of the age, was sure to be imitated by Mrs. Woudbe; she had her fêtes, her public breakfasts, her private plays, her concerts, her archery, her conversations, and there was a time when she was one of the best bats in the county; but, as she might have learned, even from an old almanack, "all things change;" and as the men were no longer to be tempted to get agues at her country seat, or surfeits at her town residence, the ladies dropped off of course.

Ladies!!!

If a novel writer must be taxed for truth and probability every third line, what is to become of the avocation, or profession, or confession, or what the world pleases? The reader is warned, that the author will plead her privilege, and in future annihilate time, space, and circumstance, whenever her story requires it; but this once she assures them, that in a certain country called Utopia, ladies of the first distinction, and who have even never been *found out* themselves, will make one at the most ridiculous puppet-show, given by women with whom they never associate, whose whole lives are past in a continued scene of abandoned depravity, and who literally rob the miserable prostitute of her hire; but the grand secret, that is the Utopian secret, is, *the men are there*.

Mrs. Woudbe was now becoming a very miserable woman: she had a tall daughter, and no adorers; she made her parties, and invited her friends as usual, but every soul was engaged: she married her daughter—still no body came. The poor woman was reduced to despair—when Lady Gauntlet took pity on her, and carried a chere amie, of high rank, five days out of
every

every seven, to dine with Mrs. Woudbe. This was a very costly consolation, and bore so hard on Mr. Woudbe's allowance for housekeeping, that he insisted on passing four of the winter months at his seat in the country.

The country ! how can a woman, whose life has passed in losing one lover and gaining another ; who hates reading, and dare not think ; who, pining for the never-to-be-recalled past, cannot enjoy the present ; who, weary of living, fears to die ; how can such a woman exist in the country !

But the evil was irremediable : she opened her sad heart to her friend, Lady Gauntlet—her ladyship at once saw into Woudbe's motive—she was affected—the house was really convenient—Woudbe's dinners were good, his wine excellent, and his wife accommodating—so that her regret was sincere : she felt acutely for *herself*, but could not take the trouble to advise her distressed friend, nor, till the instant when she entered her dressing-room, bestowed a thought on her exquisite misery.

Lord Denningcourt had once, as Mrs. Feversham said, “ a character.” So young, so handsome, and so generous as he was at his *entrée* into life, it was not in the nature of things for him to be less than a favourite in the first circles ; but as Lady Gauntlet and her friend Mrs. Woudbe, were rather too far advanced in life to be his lordship's taste, he had, and perhaps he was the only man who *could* resist the fascination of the one lady, and totally overlook the other. The Countess had the world at her feet ; but as one stubborn being rebelled against her sovereign power, he was of more importance than all the rest ; and though few ladies die of passion for a *loungeur*, he was the magnet that induced her to oblige her little lord with her company at Mushroom Place ; for, though she was in the secret of his family arrangements, nothing short of her own gratification would have carried her thither.

To insinuate that Lord Denningcourt was ignorant of the Countess's partiality, would be to suppose him ignorant also of the manners of the age, or extremely stupid : he was neither ;—but though he had been a

man of intrigue, all his amours had more than mere custom and ton to recommend them; and he had a strong propensity to believe the best side of every body's character, and to pity the worst. He did not, of course, think Lady Gauntlet a Lucrece; but self-flattery, of which he had a competent share, persuaded him, an attachment so persevering (it had now lasted three or four years, that is, whenever they happened to meet) must be an uncommon one; and though he had not the least inclination to abate of his indifference, he could not help treating her with particular respect.

Lady Gauntlet saw, through that apathy which was becoming habitual, a concern for the young person, whose note to him involved her in such difficulties; and she also saw a disgust he could ill conceal, increasing every moment against his intended wife; she took advantage of the moment, and made herself the confident of his feeling in both points.

He admired Rosa: he spoke of her embarrassment with compassion, and with regret of her unprotected situation;—he shrunk from the narrow mind his intended and almost affianced wife betrayed, and declared, while she fed the jealousy of her fantastical sister, and betrayed her own envy, by reviling a lovely, unoffending girl, she looked like an absolute fury.

"You admire this charming young woman, Lord Denningcourt," said Lady Gauntlet, with infinite softness in her eyes and manner.

"Not as a woman, Lady Gauntlet," replied his lordship, "but as an unprotected, nay, do you not see she is a persecuted, young creature."

"Shall I protect her, Lord Denningcourt?"

His lordship looked surprised.

"Will it oblige you?"

He kissed her fair hand. "It will—honour yourself, dear Countess."

"Will it oblige you?"

He kissed both fair hands, and the lady took the first opportunity to steal from the company in search of the distressed damsel, whom she was anxious to protect, not only for, but from Lord Denningcourt; and an opportunity already half offered.

Poor

Poor Mrs. Woudbe, in ransacking her invention for expedients to kill time in the country, hit on one, which required all Lady Gauntlet's command of countenance to hear without laughing outright.

Mrs. Woudbe had been the first at almost every thing; but still there was a point of notoriety, which her residence in the country only could attain—she would write a book.

“A book, child!” exclaimed Lady Gauntlet—“what, would you write the—” Harlot's Progress was on her lips, but she checked the impulse of satire, which would so well deserve a retort.

“Yes, a book! As to your Burneys, and Smiths, and Moores, and Pratts, and such odd quizzes, one might make as good stories from what one see in ones own family, or your ladyship's—and indeed every family I know; but as to castles, and chains, and moats, and lovers, these now are the things that pleases me; and I am sure, I could out-horror the wax figure all to nothing, if could but write a little faster, and spell a little better.”

“Keep an amanuensis,” said Lady Gauntlet.

This conversation, which passed the last time the fair friends met, recurred to Lady Gauntlet's recollection in the moment of Mrs. Woudbe's entrance—“Yes,” said she, internally, “she will write, and my protégée shall be her amanuensis.” Her ladyship requested Rosa to walk into the next room, to look at some drawings of her daughter's; and then, after hearing a catalogue of distresses from poor Mrs. Woudbe, mentioned her young friend and the book.

Mrs. Woudbe said she was a very lovely girl; and instead of writing books for her, which indeed she was afraid would wear out her patience, might amuse her, answer letters, fill up cards; and, above all, being so pretty, and, as her ladyship said, so accomplished, her attraction might help to fill her deserted rooms, and once more bring her parties into fashion.

All this, and more, Lady Gauntlet was sure would happen.

“But will she go into the horrid country with me?” asked Mrs. Woudbe, in a desponding accent.

That

That too Lady Gauntlet pledged herself for; and Mrs. Woudbe rejoiced at such an acquisition—was impatient to fix every thing—terms she left to her friend, for the morrow was her doomsday; to-morrow she left London, without a party, for four long months, and it was now the middle of October.

Lady Gauntlet went herself to fetch Rosa; and having hurried over the character of Mrs. Woudbe, as a good sort of an ignorant woman, abounding in riches, announced the situation she had procured for her, with a salary of fifty guineas. The only draw-back on the eligibility of the situation, she confessed, was an obligation to go directly to one of the finest seats in England, where an extensive and well-chosen library of books, music, drawing, and such domestic amusements, were all the resources from ennui.

“All!” repeated Rosa, with energy, and colouring from excess of grateful pleasure.

“Then you can live happily in the country?” said Lady Gauntlet, embracing her, and affecting to attribute the real pleasure she felt at the early and unexpected completion of her own secret wish, to joy at the establishment of her little friend, as she now gaily called her. “But before I present you in your new character,” said she, “I must speak of Lord Denningcourt. You blush—does his name then excite so much pleasure, or is it painful to speak of him?”

“Neither, my amiable patroness,” answered Rosa, with an air of ingenuity that confirmed her words. “If I blush, it is because I feel I have been so ungrateful as not to think of one to whom I owe so much happiness;—it is Lord Denningcourt I must thank for Lady Gauntlet’s goodness; but believe me, you can speak on no subject that will give me pain.”

Lady Gauntlet seldom felt a rising blush; when the extraordinary circumstance did happen, the mask of rouge happily concealed it; at this moment she was conscious of the weakness, and turned away her head; but, after a pause, “Well,” she assumed, “I believe every word you say; and you must believe I—I can have no—that is, I have only your interest and honour at heart, when I hint it is by no means necessary

fary

fary for Lord Denningcourt to know exactly where you are."

"Certainly not," replied Rosa, with a chearful and ready acquiescence which was very acceptable to the Countess; and Mrs. Feversham's hints at that moment recurring to her recollection, so accordant with the reserve recommended by her ladyship, she repeated, "No—certainly not."

"You are a charming and a good girl," said the countess—"I wish my daughters were as complying."

"Your daughters!" repeated Rosa—tears starting into her eyes—"ah! how happy are they in such a mother! Envious blessing! a mother, whose virtues and whose example, pure spirits must exult to emulate."

Lady Gauntlet again turned her face another way, and hastily passing to the dressing-room, presented Rosa to her friend as her now settled companion.

Mrs. Woudbe saluted her very graciously; asked if she could bear the odious country—stared at hearing it was her choice—could not think how it were possible; but her almost incredulous wonder had in it a certain degree of comfort;—with a companion so chearful, *all* her hours could not be quite deplorable: she longed to begin the experiment, and even proposed carrying her home in the carriage to dine with Mr. Woudbe.

Lady Gauntlet saw no objection to the obliging offer, as her things might be sent after her.

Rosa modestly suggested the propriety of taking leave of a person from whom she had received great civilities.

Lady Gauntlet would take all the return necessary for those civilities on herself; but perceiving, by Rosa's intelligent countenance, that she really had a desire to return to Madame La Croix, her ladyship, whose long-practised, coinciding sweetness was grown too much into nature to suffer her to oppose the wishes of any being with whom she was connected, by *direct means*, begged she would act in that and every other respect, as was most agreeable to herself; for such was her confidence in the right turn of her mind, her approbation would even anticipate every step she would
chuse

chuse to take. How painfully flattering to the grateful Rosa was this goodness, and how certain to carry every point the politic countess projected.

Mrs. Woudbe, who had a thousand horrid regulations to make previous to her banishment, took her leave, and left her future companion to vent the thankful effusions of her heart at the feet of her noble protectress.

All that was kind, condescending, and affectionate, was Lady Gauntlet; all that was respectfully enthusiastic and grateful, was her protégée. Again the former reminded the latter of the prudence, not to say necessity, of concealing from Lord Denningcourt her residence and situation; and to render her secret more secure, she recommended it to her not to inform La Croix where or with whom she was going to rusticate; for though La Croix was certainly the best creature in the world, she was not infallible; but neither she nor any other person could tell what they did not know—ergo, neither Madame La Croix nor any other person was to be trusted with the arrangements of that morning.

Thus flattered, caressed, and protected, sitting on a French sofa, in an elegant, highly ornamented dressing-room, the perfumes of Arabia breathing round from China vases, filled with blooming sweets, by the side of a woman whose beauty and affability were as superior as her rank, how could Rosa, surrounded by the spells of fascination, resist or suspect the enchantress; or how, in pledging her sacred word and honour, to keep her situation a profound secret, in such a moment, and such company, recollect her prior engagement with poor John Brown, “to acquaint him with every step she took.”

Rosa’s heart was as pure and as naturally perfect as her person was lovely; but, as that able delineator of the human mind, Lady Gauntlet, said of Madame La Croix, she was not infallible—she at this instant forgot John Brown, and every promise made to him.

The countess now having ordered her toilette, sent her own chair with Rosa:—Madame La Croix welcomed her with as much warmth as if her absence had robbed

robbed her of a dear indulgence ; and her countenance fell, when she understood a few hours longer only would terminate her residence in — street ; but as she protested no person in the world could more truly respect and love the charming Countess of Gauntlet than her humble self, so no being could more implicitly believe all she did was right ; yet it was impossible to know the lovely Miss Walsingham, and not regret the being deprived of her society ; for her part, she had never felt so disposed to love any person on so short an acquaintance ; and there was a certain person in the world, a man of high rank and fortune, who would be in despair.

In that instant, while Rosa was wondering whether Madame alluded to Lord Lowder or Lord Denningcourt, and how she became acquainted with the designs of either, to her utter confusion and dismay, a high-varnished carriage drew up to the door ; and she saw Sir Jacob Lydear hand out the beautiful Lady Lowder.

Madame La Croix instantly left the parlour, to attend the lady and her escorte, in too much haste to observe the change in Rosa's countenance.

It was now she regretted the not accepting Mrs. Woudbe's offer, and now she also recollected her motives for declining it ; and much as she desired to quit a house hitherto so unexceptionable in her idea, yet to quit it, and not see honest John—not explain to him her situation—not settle a mode of correspondence—not give him credentials to Scotland ;—how, oh ! how could she answer it to her heart, and to her honour, to do that.

Lady Gauntlet's injunctions, to observe a total silence in respect to where she was going, to Madame La Croix, were not the less binding for the sweet and gentle manner in which they were enforced ; *she* could have no interest in the arrangement—none in the concealment ; *she* was influenced by the principles of benevolence to assist the friendless, and by those of virtue to protect the innocent ; and however interesting to all Rosa's former and present feelings the preserving an intercourse with John, yet such was her respect to the opinion of her patroness, such her idea of the sublimity
of

of her virtue, and such her own real apprehension of insult, if again reduced to the friendless and forlorn situation from which she had been so unexpectedly delivered, that she determined to make Lady Gauntlet the confidante of the distressful dilemma she was in respecting her old friend, and submit to her superior wisdom, and that innate tenderness of nature, for which she gave her full credit, the future means of corresponding with him.

While thus recurring to her own immediate situation, she almost forgot the persons who, to her astonishment, were now under the same roof with herself.

She was so entirely a stranger to the less culpable side of Sir Jacob Lydear's character, that she could not even give him credit for the service he had rendered her, in removing her from Mushroom Place;—the recollection of his conduct in Yorkshire rendered her suspicious of the motives for an act by which she was benefited; and there was nothing she more dreaded than being seen by him. Once she had a transient suspicion that he was the person of rank and fortune Madame La Croix alluded to; but if he had come to the house on such an errand, would Lady Lowder have been his companion? An interview with her old school-companion was indeed little less desired, though not so much feared, as with Sir Jacob.

While thus, with her eyes fixed through the window blind on Lady Lowder's coach, she ruminated on her situation, she saw it draw off, to make way for another carriage not less showy, though the pannels were only ornamented with an humble W. out of which stepped Mrs. Woudbe.

A flush of joy overspread Rosa's cheeks, and she was on the point of flying to her, but Lady Gauntlet's injunction arrested her steps.

To claim Mrs. Woudbe's protection, would be to acquaint not only Madame La Croix, but the Mushrooms, the Lowders, and every body from whom she wished to be concealed, with her situation, and expose the generous Countess to the ill offices of those people so unworthy to be called her friends.

Lady

Lady Lowder, like Mrs. Woudbe, were probably both Madame's customers;—accident had certainly brought the latter thither, as she was ignorant of her being an intimate in the house, and why not the former? as to Sir Jacob's being in London, and in the train of his mother's visitor, it was, though unexpected, a very natural circumstance. In the hope, therefore, she might entirely escape observation, she ascended, by a back pair of stairs, to the room where she had slept; and, after packing what clothes she had out of her trunk, saw, within half an hour, from the window, Lady Lowder step, alone, into her carriage—that of Mrs. Woudbe not being in waiting.

An universal trepidation seized her;—her new patroness gone;—Lady Lowder gone! and Sir Jacob remaining! spite of the good impression Madame's kindness had made on her mind, she trembled with apprehension. Yes, it must be Sir Jacob she meant; he was her man of rank and fashion—he had made but too successful inquiries after her;—what now should she do—how make her escape?

In that moment a tall, handsome man, in a blue undress frock, a large cocked uniform hat and fierce cockade, ran gaily up the steps of Madame's house, smartly rapped at the door, was let in; and lo, at the same time, the formidable Baronet was let out.

Rosa again respired with freedom: she reproached herself for the half-formed suspicion of Madame; and having finished packing her trunks, was descending with alacrity to the parlour, when, one of the shewing-rooms being opened by the gentleman who just entered, she saw Mrs. Woudbe advance, and heard her say, in a reproachful tone, "You are three quarters of an hour beyond your appointment." The closing the door prevented her seeing or hearing more; and she reached the parlour without a single comment on an incident which she was too innocent and too ignorant to suspect, was any thing extraordinary.

She was, however, surprised to find Madame with her writing-stand open before her:—this, however, she soon reconciled to probability; for, as Madame had certainly quite as much pride as any French milliner

liner need to have, and as she had never spoken either of an acquaintance or customers who were not titled, *Mrs.* Woudbe's rank, Rosa supposed, might be conigned to some of the work-women.

In a few minutes *Mrs.* Woudbe's carriage returned; and, after it had waited a short time, the Lady descended the stairs, was met in the hall, and attended to her carriage by Madame.

What became of the gentleman who outstaid his appointment, was no part of Rosa's inquiry; she was now wholly taken up in making peace with her own heart—atoning, by every possible attention to Madame, for the injustice she had secretly done her; and Madame, on her part, was fully occupied, by endeavours to draw from the unsuspecting Rosa the place where she might have the happiness to see her;—but had she been sifting the most practised, instead of the most artless of women, her attempts could not have been more completely defeated; for Rosa, after confessing she was under an obligation of honour not to reveal her destination, referred her to the Countess of Gauntlet, whom she doubted not would permit the friendly intercourse she was so politely anxious to obtain.

Madame was silenced at once: she knew Lady Gauntlet must have been impelled, by very strong motives indeed, to take so beautiful a creature as Rosa under her protection; she suspected that the charms of the young stranger had some how, or some where, attracted certain regards inimical to the Countess's dearest interest, and the intention to conceal her from the world justified those suspicions.

Madame had herself formed some plans, which the removal of Rosa must subvert, but she dared not attempt to counteract the will and pleasure of the divine Countess.

“ Well, then, my charming friend,” cried Madame, “ should any event restore you to the liberty of thinking for *yourself*, you will not forget *me*.”

Rosa coloured: she wished to explain that she was the most obliged creature to Lady Gauntlet, and the most happy, in submitting every thing to her, in the world;

world; but Madame's dinner was announced, and she regretted deeply her constant friend was out of town.

In the evening Lady Gauntlet called to take Rosa from — street in her carriage. Madame was so humble, so servile, and so officious about the Countess, and, in her presence, so unmindful of every thing else, that Rosa was spared any pain in the separation; and, when seated at the back of the vis-a-vis, her retrospect of the five minutes did not raise Madame in her estimation.

The Countess was thoughtful; and Rosa did not presume to break a silence, no less new than awful, while the carriage, like all other coronetted carriages, flew over the pavement, till it stopped in Portman-Square.

Mrs. Woudbe received her with rapture; her eyes were red with weeping, but she made fully up for Lady Gauntlet's silence; her tongue ran incessantly; and had it been possible to annihilate time and space, no woman would have been happier; for Mr. Woudbe had promised that, on her consenting to stay in the country four months instead of three, she should, on her return to town, give a masquerade, and invite every body, which was the most delightful thing in the world, for, under a mask, every body would be sure to come.

Lady Gauntlet's want of spirits was accounted for on the entrance of Mr. Woudbe, who *delicately* assured her, he was credibly informed, by some of her enemies, Lord Gauntlet was in danger of losing both his title and estate. Her ladyship arose with dignity, embraced both Rosa and her friend, without seeming to have heard Mr. Woudbe, and permitted him to lead her to her carriage.

Rosa burst into tears. What! had such a woman enemies! ah! well then might so wretched a being as herself be oppressed and persecuted—well might the dear and charming woman appear out of spirits—her heart must beat in unison with her lord,—with the father of her children;—her interest, her honour was his;—his deprivations must affect—his griefs overwhelm—ah! why was she not permitted to use her humble efforts to console, to attend, to watch by her?

“ Oh,

“ Oh, for heaven’s sake !” cried Mrs. Woudbe, “ don’t be in the difmals—I am all over nerve, and expected you would amuse me.”

Rofa recollected the duties of her fituation ; and apologifed for the natural emotions of grief at parting with her invaluable friend. Mr. Woudbe joined them, and was fo highly pleafed with the addition his wife had made to the family, that the evening went off with fo much fatisfaction on his part, eafe on that of his wife, and content on that of Rofa, it was not till fhewn to an handsome bed-chamber that fhe lamented Lady Gauntlet’s domeftic troubles on her own account. The cloud which hung on her ladyfhip’s brow prevented the intended confidence refpecting poor John ; and as the hour for their departure from town was fixed at ten, fhe had no alternative but writing.

If any thing could excufe Mrs. Woudbe’s averfion to the retirement her husband thought neceffary, it was his country feat and manner of living in it. The houfe was large without being convenient, fplendid without comfort, gaudy without elegance ; its front was in the middle of a large dirty village, and the grounds behind, fo loaded with old timber and young plantations, as to obftruct every poffible view of the adjacent country.

Inftead of a large well chosen library, the apartment, originally defigned for that purpofe, had been converted into a theatre, a St. Cecilia’s hall, and a dancing-room.

Mr. Woudbe read books of agriculture, and treatifes on farriery, in a room erected in the garden ; where, as he had good reafons for not entrufing his affairs to a fteward, he kept his own accounts, and tranfacted the juftice bufinefs of the village.

When Mrs. Woudbe did read at all, her ftudies were the thumb’d volumes of a little circulating library at the next market town ; the only books her manfion contained were a family bible, fome old fchool-books of her daughter, and a few novels publifhed by fubfcription, where fhe had the pleafure to fee her own name in the printed alphabetical lift, among the W.’s of quality.

A few

A few glaring roses, painted by her half-educated daughter, and stuck over her dressing-room chimney, were all the traits of drawing about Mrs. Woudbe, and she did not understand a note of music.—So much for the elegant amusements of the country seat of Mr. Woudbe.

Mrs. Woudbe could neither bear solitude, nor be amused by the company she could command: Rosa, the charming companion chance so unexpectedly threw in her way, soon shared the fate of the rest of her favourites; for Rosa was totally a stranger to all the scenes of delightful dissipation which furnished topics to amuse her. She had neither read nor seen, and could not talk, on subjects to entertain her patroness, who often, very often, preferred the company of her ignorant loquacious woman, to that of her elegant companion.

After fatiguing herself and Rosa two days, by running over the house and grounds, rather to abuse than shew them, the poor woman first became gloomy, then peevish, and at last rude. Nothing, either Rosa or any other person did, pleased her, and the worst part of her ill humour fell, according to the old charter, on her humble companion.

If Rosa was chearful—it was well for *her*,—*she* had no trouble, no care, nothing to sigh after: if, sinking under the poignancy of retrospection, her down-cast eyes traced, without marking, the flowers on the carpet, she was the dullest creature in the universe,—enough to give the horrors, instead of curing them; and if, neither gay nor grave, she happened to hit the happy medium,—oh how conceitedly insipid!

Rosa felt the slavery she was in, but saw no prospect of emancipation that might not lead from bad to worse, except Lady Gauntlet, when she could dare to acquaint her with her sufferings, should be pleased to recommend her to some other situation; and the answer she received from her ladyship, in respect to her friend John, had increased her respect; and gratitude for her patroness, without encouraging her to hope any future letters, except in answer to those she might please to write, would be acceptable.

Her

Her ladyship, in the most obliging terms, commended her attachment to an old friend, promised if he came to La Croix, where he had not yet been, she would herself give him an address to Mr. Woudbe's, having ordered him to be sent to her for that purpose; said she was going to Bath, &c. but gave no address there.

This letter then, amid many other daily mortifications, was a new source of grief and perplexity: either some accident had happened to poor John, or he was deceived in the means by which he meant to acquaint himself with her residence; in either case, she had no possible means of serving him, and felt every hour more keenly than the last, a misfortune which deprived her of a sincere and honest, though humble friend, at a period, when the more she saw of his superiors, the more she valued and regretted him.

Sad and solitary were most of the hours she passed under Mrs. Woudbe's protection: the husband was vulgar and purse proud; the wife peevish, ignorant, and often rude; they had no virtues, and having no resources within themselves, could not be tolerable company to a third person.

There was belonging to this house, which Mr. Woudbe bought a great bargain, a chapel, kept for shew, not devotion; and an old out-of-tune organ, left in it by the former owner, still remained; thither our poor beggar went, when the cold was not too intense, to play, to weep and to ruminate on the incidents of her life; and thither too did the image of him, whom no change of circumstance had power entirely to banish from her heart, pursue her.

There she wept over the happy scenes of childhood at Mount-pleasant;—there she mourned for the good Major,—and there she had full leisure to recollect and regret the fate of his beautiful Kattie; and her less pitiable mother;—there indeed, all her early friends, as well as late attachments, rose in array before her hopeless fancy;—had Lady Gauntlet condescended to encourage her to write, dear Mrs. Harley was at Bath, and some happy chance might have discovered her address;—had she been blessed with acquaintance or family connections, through some or other of them she

she might have found means of discovering the dear and beloved Mrs. Walsingham. "And, oh!" cried she passionately, "why, why must my Elinor, the dear, dear companion of my youthful happiness! why must she be lost to the poor friendless Rosa?"

A dreary winter, past thus in unavailing regret, and hopeless despondence, could not act as a cosmetic on the complexion; a green and yellow melancholy began to invade the lily of Rosa's face and neck; her appetite failed, and she was fast sinking into despair, when a sudden change in Mrs. Woudbe, by interesting her feeling for another, diverted her mind from brooding over its own corrosive retrospects.

Mrs. Woudbe became at once all affection, harmony and good nature; she could not exist a moment without dear Wally, as she chose to call our heroine; dear, dear creature! what was life without her! her sense, her taste, her opinion were infallible,—nobody living or dead was ever like her!

Rosa, naturally grateful and affectionate, greeted the change with a mixture of pleasure and pity: it was certainly more desirable to be an object of regard, than reproach, even if that regard was more the result of caprice, than judgment; and she could not but compassionate a mind so weakly subject to every new start of passion.

A very short time after the change in Mrs. Woudbe's temper, Rosa was, in form, invested with all the honours of a confidential friend; knowing, as the lady said, the goodness as well as sensibility of her nature, she would commit to her the secret sorrow which too fatally affected her temper and embittered all her enjoyments.

Poor Mrs. Woudbe's parents, though ancient gentry, had, she said, the misfortune to be reduced to the necessity of accepting pecuniary aids from Mr. Woudbe.

This, as far as related to the poverty of her parents, Rosa well understood; for Mr. Woudbe, who had no idea of hiding his candle under a bushel, was, particularly after supper, by no means ashamed of telling the exact sum he allowed them.

But

But poor Mrs. Woudbe had a natural brother, the son of her father by an amiable foreigner, who was inexpressibly dear to her, and though the most amiable of men, so unaccountably obnoxious to her husband, that he would not hear him named : now this dear brother, who had been unfortunate, had a lovely wife and a large family of helpless children, with no dependence but on her.

Mrs. Woudbe sighed ; alas ! he was her dear and only brother. Rosa wept ; and the finale of this moving history was, a request on the part of the distressed relation, that Rosa would receive this dear brother's letters under her cover, as Mr. Woudbe forbid her corresponding with him ; and as the post letters being carried to his counting-room, he might know the hand, and be displeased with his innocent wife ; Rosa consented and became a dearer creature than ever.

Mrs. Woudbe's brother was a very constant correspondent, and his sister's good humour continuing, she had leisure to resume her plan of book-writing, and in order to out-Herod Herod, in the description of black forests, dark woods, and rushing torrents, took the whim of night rambling ; sometimes through a wilderness at the back of the house, to a cascade of water that fell into a large basin ; at others to a thick-grove, at the extremity of the park, and this often in weather that *should* endear a comfortable fire-side, for the express purpose of writing up to the deformed side of nature. Mr. Woudbe, who was at all times exceedingly proud of seeing his wife's name in the newspapers, provided nothing impertinent glanced at the tender points, either in his character or hers, encouraged her scribbling mania ; and, at the hours when she retired to her closet, to begin the notable history, which, before a single line was wrote, she christened the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of St. Bog-and-moat, an embargo was laid on the speech of all the domestics, who were also provided with flannel socks to move about in, that no interruption might be given the coming wonder.

But, notwithstanding so much care and study, the literary brat remained in embryo : The lady wrote
very

very bad—spelt worse—and, what was not to be remedied, invented worse than all; so that neither the stillness of the dreary country, the fine, free handwriting of Rosa, nor evening rambles among trees in the dark, assisted the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of Bog-and-moat.

Mr. Woudbe was disappointed; but as the lady promised to write next year, and as that promise was a kind of implied agreement to return to the country next year, he agreed to go to town, and give her the reins in all preparations for the masquerade.

Well might Rosa consider the last four months as a lapse in her extraordinary life; for though, since she had become Mrs. Woudbe's confidante in the affair of her dear natural brother, she could form no wish within the walls of Mr. Woudbe's house, or the paling of his park, but what was even anticipated; yet, the kindness was too systematical, too uniform, and too studied, to excite any of the thrilling sensations, the grateful enthusiasm, which were raised by every word and look of Lady Gauntlet; but the joyful break, which letters from that charming woman, made on the sameness of her life, were no more; she had ceased to answer, which was equal to declining to receive letters; and she had never heard from poor John. That London, which was the haven of happiness to Mrs. Woudbe, had nothing in it for her; nor did that country she was so eager to leave afford one object to please or to regret.

She was now, in the very bloom of her days, literally wasting her sweets in the desert air; the insipidity of her existence naturally cast a cloud over her once cheerful temper: true, she was no longer exposed to insult or distress; but with Mrs. Woudbe, all her good sense, accomplishments, and fine taste, were as much buried as they could have been among the Shetland fishermen; for, in spite of that Lady's invariable kindness, she often perceived her company and conversation were irksome.

Thus left to a few such books as were relished by mere country misses, or to the tormenting retrospect of past scenes, in which the one image she wished to forget was always predominant, her fancy took a retro-

Grade turn, and rested in anguish on the past, without one hopeless glance at what was to come.

Meanwhile the preparations for town went on; the day was fixed—Mr. Woudbe's savings put him in good-humour; he presented his wife with a bill of a thousand pounds, to begin the season in London, and an order for a pearl necklace of five hundred pounds price on his jeweller. All, therefore, was halcyon with Mrs. Woudbe, who also insisted on Rosa's acceptance of a bank note of fifty pounds, to make purchases equal to the honourable station of her companion.

C H A P. II.

Low life above stairs.

“Ye tinsel insects whom a Court maintains,
 “That count your beauties only by your stains,
 “Spin all your cobwebs o’er the eye of day;
 “The muse’s wing shall brush you all away.”

“YESTERDAY Mr. and Mrs. Woudbe, with a grand retinue, arrived at their house in Portman-square, from their seat in Dorsetshire.”—So said the newspapers, and what was rather out of their way, they said truth.

One of Mrs. Woudbe's first visits was to Madame La Croix; whither, Rosa was pleased she was not invited to accompany her; as still adhering to the commands of her patroness, she resolved to pay her duty in Pall-Mall, before she was seen any where else; and accordingly, having borrowed Mr. Woudbe's coach the first morning after their arrival in town, she was announced to Lady Gauntlet at her usual breakfast hour.

The Countess of Gauntlet had no longer an interest in the affairs of the Beggar, as Lord Denningcourt had taken himself from the polite world in a more extraordinary manner than he had lately lived in it. His dislike to his bride elect, which took firm root at the time Rosa was fainting at Mushroom Place, increased so rapidly, that, before he left that elegant seat, it was improved

improved into downright aversion. He had struggled in vain with his feelings; he was a few thousands already in debt, and had only as few hundreds to support the dignity of his peerage: he was, as Mr. Feverham said, "As proud as Lucifer, and as poor as Timon." It was therefore a difficult point to give up eighty thousand pounds; but Lord Denningcourt was not appalled by difficulties; before the marriage articles were signed, and after he had been made the happy husband of one of Sir Solomon Mushroom's co-heiresses in all the papers, he left his P. P. C. at Mushroom House, and had since only been heard of by report; which stated, that he had retired to his old castle in the north with a young girl, of whom he was fond, to vegetate in obscurity.

As whenever the Countess of Gauntlet had happened to meet the ungrateful Denningcourt, she was actually disposed to fancy herself deeply in love, the indifference with which her tender regard had been received, could not be expected to leave an impression on her mind, favourable to any request of his; but though she owed nothing to Lord Denningcourt, she was too politic to fail in respect to herself.

No woman could manifest less regard to the censure of the world than her ladyship, yet it was not possible to be more tenacious of a certain impression, which she had successfully substituted for character, and which actually had in many points softened, and in others dropped a veil over the most flagrant and immoral actions; that sweet and insinuating softness—that irresistible suavity of manner—that polite affability—that nameless grace, which, in a voice of the most perfect harmony, gave utterance to more than words, and fascinated the faculties as well as sight—that dangerous delusion, which, darting from her melting eyes, sunk into the soul, were all the effect of deep study and consummate art.

The reader already knows both Lord and Lady Gauntlet were well received in the most moral court in Europe; and his lordship had a handsome appointment there, procured by the interest of his Countess; the necessity, therefore, of silencing some, buying off

others, and mollifying all she possibly could of the indignant sufferers by her detestable immorality, and by her successful deceit, is obvious: she was indeed so sensible of the advantage of a good report, even from her lowest dependants, that she had reduced smiles and affability to a regular system. Rosa, the mere child of nature, was in reality what Lady Gauntlet so finely acted; but as what in the one was the spontaneous display of an artless mind, was in the other attained with the utmost labour and difficulty; it was as natural for her ladyship to suspect the sincerity of Rosa, as it was for Rosa to believe Lady Gauntlet all she appeared.

Conscious of her own secret motives for the kindness she had shewn to Rosa, Lady Gauntlet dared not throw off the mask, least they should become too palpable to be mistaken even by the silly Mrs. Woudbe.

She had, in the security of her empire over her victims, affected to smile at, nay, even pity the pangs of many a deserted wife, and many a disappointed mistress; and, in more than one instance, while she rived the soul of affection, and planted daggers into the fond and wedded heart of her *friend*, so contrived to time her tears, so patiently to endure sorrow, as to appear to the faithless husband, herself the amiable sufferer, and the injured wife, the merciless offender. But to give the world reason to suppose,—nay, to admit to herself, that her advances were repelled, and her charms seen with indifference, was torture even she could not bear; therefore, civility to her protégée was politic, if not necessary.

Rosa, transported to find herself received with unchanged kindness, could not contain the grateful effusions of her guileless heart; and so powerful is the emanation of virtuous enthusiasm, it affected even Lady Gauntlet.

When her first emotions were subsided in a flood of tears, Lady Gauntlet, in mere regard for the interest of her *protégée*, drew from her all she thought of the Woodbes, as well as the secret of the natural brother, which, indeed, was the only part of the communication that appeared at all new to her; for though her description of Mrs. Woudbe's elegant retreat was proved

so

so erroneous, and their treatment of Rosa, the much greater part of the winter, so different from what she expected, all passed as matter of course, except the sisterly affection of the lady for her unfortunate brother, which was a theme of so much interest, she had it repeated over and over; and, in return, acquainted Rosa with the strange conduct of Lord Denningcourt, to which she added hints, that her own son, Lord Delworth, was a candidate for the fair hand of the forsaken lady; that Lord Lowder, having unfortunately lost all his bets for the last two years, had been obliged to try his fortune in another climate, leaving his beautiful Countess to be consoled by his handsome relation, Sir Jacob Lydear, who being in the same unfortunate habit of betting on all occasions, and seldom failing, like his lordship, to lose, was in a way like him also, to be obliged to change the scene. Satire came blunted from the beautiful mouth of Lady Gauntlet; it indeed seemed to change its nature; and what would have disgusted Rosa from any other person, amused her as the effusions of perfect good-humour from her amiable patroness.

Lord Lowder abroad, Lord Denningcourt in the country, and Sir Jacob so engaged between consoling the bewitched widow and betting, there could be no danger from him; what then had Rosa to fear, while happy in the continued regard of the most amiable woman in the world, who, all condescension, requested she would inform Mrs. Woudbe, that her box at the opera was at her service, her daughters being on a visit with their intended sister-in-law at Mushroom Place, and herself just setting off for Windsor—though she would not leave town without first sending her chair to leave a card at dear Mrs. Woudbe's door.

Rosa returned to Portman-square delighted and to be delighted:—the report of the coming masquerade was already disseminated among the idlers of fashion. Who knew Mrs. Woudbe?—Nobody. Who wished on this occasion to know her?—Every body. The door was thronged with carriages;—Duchesses, Countesses, and simple Ladies, with all the beautiful unmarried women in town, left cards; and many a proud name, to whose

persons Mrs. Woudbe was an absolute stranger, whose notices she dared not even hope for, said, in indirect terms, "Pray, ma'am, invite me to your masquerade."

The humble visitors who were usually admitted to eat Mr. Woudbe's dinners, and flatter his wife, could not now gain admittance: All was agreeable bustle; —painters, carpenters, artificial flower-makers, musicians, confectioners, milliners, mantua and robe-makers, thronged the hall, shouldering each other for precedence.

Rosa, to whom the scene was in every respect perfectly new, and who, with all the humble consciousness of her own mean origin, was very much disposed to respect high rank, notwithstanding the specimen Lord Lowder had given her of certain manners, run over the cards, and was particularly struck with one, on which the names of the Countess of Denningcourt and Miss Angus were written.

"The Countess of Denningcourt!" exclaimed Rosa.

"I am myself surprised," cried Mrs. Would-be.

Not Lady Gauntlet's chair, but herself, was at that moment announced. The report of the masquerade had reached her ladyship just as she was stepping into her travelling-chaise to set off for Windsor; but as she would want at least a dozen tickets for herself and friends, she could not possibly risk giving Mrs. Woudbe reason to doubt the warmth of her attachment, so was in time to join her in surprise at seeing the Countess of Denningcourt's card on Mrs. Woudbe's table.

"'Tis the Countess Dowager," said she, addressing Rosa. "Sure, the odd woman is not already weary of her lozenge; or perhaps she wants to exhibit her lunatic protégée on masquerade."

"I rather think, with submission to your ladyship," joined Mr. Woudbe, "it is Miss Angus; who, in order to get a ticket, has left her aunt's card, by way of introducing her own."

As Rosa always concluded Kattie Buhanun was carried off by Mr. Angus, she could not hear the name without emotion.

"I shall invite her brother," said Mrs. Woudbe.

"A fine

"A fine young fellow enough, but very stupid," answered the Countess. "He dined in our party one Sunday at Lowder's, and brought with him a strange creature from Scotland, whom I remember, though placed by the Countess at my table—I thank her—would not play. If you wish to be amused, invite him too. Cameron—Doctor Cameron, I think, was his ugly name."

"Oh, dear madam!" cried Rosa, out of breath with emotion, "he is the best—the very best of men." But recollecting that his being in company with a man who seduced his ward, the daughter of his deceased friend, could not be reconciled to the action of the best, the very best of men, she added, "I—I believe——"

The ladies both laughed.

"*You, you believe!*" said Lady Gauntlet. "Well, I am glad you have your doubts; for certainly it would be a pity so ugly and strange a mortal should be the best—the very best."

Rosa was silent. She thought no more of the cards, though requested by Mrs. Woudbe to sort them. Poor Katie Buhannon! his, perhaps, in some obscure part of the world, while her seducer was received into the society of even such good women as Lady Gauntlet occupied her thoughts, and from her they naturally recurred to the Major, Castle Gowrand, and the burn-side. Her agitation increased: she was obliged to retire.

The ladies looked at each other.—"Mighty odd this," cried the Countess.

"I think so," said her friend.

"I have a notion she is Scotch herself," cried Lady Gauntlet.

Mrs. Woudbe looked all wonder: she thought the Countess was well acquainted with her family and connection.

The Countess was never at a loss. "With her family," she said; "but who knew what connection a young girl so handsome might make."

"But her country?"

"She had been recommended from the north;" but her ladyship had not another moment to stay, her carriage

riage waited ; and had Mrs. Woudbe been less engrossed by the masquerade preparation, she might have found out some little contradiction in her friend's account of Rosa ; but having so many charming things to think of, and having also an idea, that such a beautiful girl as Rosa doing the honour of her house, would really attract company thither, on less public occasions, and moreover other private reasons to be satisfied with her companion, whatever point of the compass she came from, she did not embarrass her with questions of curiosity, when she rejoined her, and expressed her regret at finding Lady Gauntlet gone.

The next evening Mrs. Woudbe signified her intention to avail herself of Lady Gauntlet's offer of her box, and desired Rosa to chuse a head dress for the occasion at La Croix's, at her expence ; but though the cause of restraint no longer existed, Rosa having omitted to mention it to her patroness, declined going there, and Mrs. Woudbe obligingly chose a very handsome turban and feathers for her herself.

The splendour of the spectacle, the music, dancing, and company, were no less new than pleasing to our Beggar. Mrs. Woudbe knew every lady, and there were some few women, and many men, who knew her ; and whether from the report of her masquerade, or the uncommon beauty of her companion, or both, the box was soon crowded. Among the many who fixed a scrutinizing eye on our heroine, she recognized the constant visitor of Madame La Croix, and politely returned his low bow.

“ Do you know Lord Aron ? ” said Mrs. Woudbe.

“ Lord Aron ! ” repeated Rosa, with surprize.

“ Lord Aron Horsenagog—you know him—you bowed to him.”

“ I know him now,” answered Rosa, “ and am astonished I did not before recollect his features ; though indeed I have heard much more than I ever saw of his lordship ; my personal knowledge of him, till I saw him in London, was very transient.”

“ You met him at Lady Gauntlet's, I suppose,” said Mrs. Woudbe, carelessly ; “ he is a great admirer of pretty women.”—

Lord

Lord Aron had now got near the back of Rosa's chair, and uttered a profusion of soft nothings to Mrs. Woudbe, while his eyes were fixed on her companion; indeed it seemed to be the rage of the evening, to flatter one lady, and stare the other out of countenance; for such a number of men succeeded each other, during the whole evening, who did nothing else, that Rosa was disgusted, and tired even of music before the opera was over.

Mrs. Woudbe undauntedly led the way to the coffee-room, her spirits exhilarated and her colour heightened by that adulation of which she had so sensibly felt the loss.

Here again the men, even those who did not take the trouble to speak, crowded round to gaze, and Rosa, ready to sink with confusion, looking about in hope of escaping the general observation, had nearly shrieked at the sight of Mr. Montreville talking to Lord Aron Horsemagog, and both earnestly observing her.

As, after the first surprise, nothing could be more natural than for a gentleman, with whom she had been acquainted, and from whom she had received such services, to say nothing of his avowed passion, to address her; in the full expectation he would do so, she summoned every principle of proper pride, of delicacy, and of sense to the aid of her fortitude, secretly exulting that the respectability of her appearance and situation would render the rencounter less embarrassing on her side, than if she had met him in the same circumstance in which she left Pontefract; but it is impossible to describe her feelings when, though she perceived his attentions were still fixed on her, he made no motion towards addressing her, not even a recognizing bow.

Astonished at a conduct which, considering every circumstance, was little less than insult; painfully oppressed by the gaze of the increasing crowd, and less able to support the heat, from the excess of her agitation, she could but just articulate a request to Mrs. Woudbe to remove, if possible, out of the crowd.

Intoxicated as that lady was with renovated vanity, a more *mal à propos* request could not have been made; "Presently," said she, turning a willing ear to some fine things Duke Evergreen was whispering close to her cheek. Rosa, no longer able to bear her situation, became courageous from wounded pride and harrowed feeling; she made a desperate effort, and pushing through the crowd with burning cheeks, and eyes suffused with tears, which she made every effort to conceal, gained the passage, and happening to turn to the right door, saw Mrs. Woudbe's servants, who concluding their mistress was coming, opened a chair, which conveyed her to the carriage before they found their mistake; the men then returned, and it is hard to say whether the sensation of indignation or sensibility were most painful, when she beheld Montreville and Lord Aron, though not together, each watching her motions.

Lord Aron advanced to the opposite side of the coach from where Montreville stood, and bluntly lamented her sudden removal from La Croix; it was his intention, he said, to offer her *terms* and place her in a better situation every way than that in which, after all his vain enquiries he now found her, and though certainly her value was lessened by being with Mrs. Woudbe, and her close connection with Lady Gauntlet, yet such was his present favourable sentiments, he would do any thing to—

Mrs. Woudbe was not a little angry when she perceived Rosa had left her, but common decency would not allow her to remain, after the young person she *chaperoned* had quitted the coffee room alone; she therefore instantly followed, and the chair reached her coach in the moment Lord Aron was professing what he would do to make Rosa happy.

Mrs. Woudbe entered the carriage in very ill humour, and Rosa was in no disposition to attempt to break her angry silence; both the manner and matter of Lord Aron's address, astonished and confounded her;—"he meant to offer her terms! to place her in a situation superior to that in which he found her! her value lessened by living with Mrs. Woudbe!" this was
a strange

a strange mode of expression, and she could no other way interpret it, than that he intended offering himself to her acceptance, and thought her consequence lowered by living in a dependent situation ; but what could he mean about Lady Gauntlet ? surely it would honour any situation to be closely connected with her ! but be his meaning what it would, how light was the attention he excited, compared with the burning torture which, though it could neither be called anger, indignation, nor grief, swelled her bosom almost to bursting, when she thought on Montreville, and when she contrasted his behaviour now, with what it had been.

She retired to her chamber the moment they got home, excused herself from supper, and was walking up and down the room in agony, when Mrs. Woudbe's woman entered, to desire that she would not go to rest, for that her mistress begged to speak with her after supper.

Every thing she now saw, heard, or expected, was full of Montreville ; “ particular business ! ”—she trembled and promised obedience.

Yes, the business must concern him ; what could he have to say ? could he suppose her mean enough to forgive ?—oh never, never !—what ! to be treated with marked contempt ! could he palliate that ?—impossible !—time now crept ;—the tardy moments lingered till she was summoned to Mrs. Woudbe, who too intent on her own affairs, to mark the eager look of Rosa, as she watched the expected particular business from Montreville, bid her, in a low voice, shut the door.

Now then—and Rosa's heart beat through her stays.—

Now then—Mrs. Woudbe hesitatingly told her, that she had a commission of the utmost importance to entrust to her—the must take her casket of jewels to Madame La Croix's, before eleven the next morning, and deliver them to her dear natural brother, who would meet her there to receive them.

The disappointed Rosa burst into tears.

Mrs. Woudbe, whose tremulous voice spoke an inward agitation she could with extreme difficulty conquer, and whose inflamed eye told a tale of secret anguish, caught the infection ; indeed, without betraying
secret,

secrets, which it is the duty of the author to keep at present inviolable, we may venture to say, whatever were the pangs which rent the bosom of the virtuous Rosa, those that swelled in the guilty soul of Mrs. Woudbe, were equally excruciating.

Supposing that the tears of her humble companion were excited by sympathy for her, and perhaps fearing a too nice inquisition in consequence, Mrs. Woudbe endeavoured to assume a cheerful aspect.

It is certainly very provoking," said she, "just on the eve of my masquerade, when, as I have you to take the trouble off my hands, I intended to have worn all my own jewels, and hire some others; but I will explain the affair to you:—that brother, that dear, though natural brother, has been wronged out of a great fortune; nay, he is even heir to a title;—he is about to make an effort, which the Chancellor owns must be successful, to recover his natural right; but though justice is on his side, he must also have money; I have already assisted him with the thousand pounds Mrs. Woudbe gave me, but that is insufficient; a friend of his will advance what more he wants on my jewels; when the cause is got, which it certainly will, they will be restored; 'tis hard, but I cannot refuse my brother."

Such great and almost unexampled proofs of fraternal regard, struck Rosa with astonishment; if it were carried to excess, if it were a fault, that excess and that fault was so accordant to her own generous disinterested feelings, that it exalted Mrs. Woudbe almost to a level with the virtuous lady Gauntlet; and if that lady's injunction occurred at all in this moment, considering none of the consequences her patroness apprehended from Lord Denningcourt's discovering her residence, could possibly happen, and that the peace of the best of sisters, and the fate of her dear natural brother was at stake, she resolved to risk even doing wrong, that right might come of it; and faithfully promising to be at the appointed time at Madame La Croix's, carried the jewels with her to her chamber, where again the image of the rude, the insolent Montreville assailing her imagination, it was not probable she

she would, by oversleeping, forget she was to be in — street by eleven.

A hackney coach being called, according to Mrs. Woudbe's directions, to convey her to Madame La Croix, she placed herself and the jewels in it, her head aching for want of rest, and her heart infinitely too big for her bosom, still dwelling on the very same being she now discovered watching the carriage as it drove from Portman-square.

However Montreville contrived it, he was near Madame La Croix's door when she alighted; but though her eyes met his, he kept up his stubborn reserve, without shewing, by a look, he had ever seen her before.

Thus haunted by the perseverance of the unaccountable Montreville, Rosa resolved, whatever were her feelings, to conceal them under affected ease, and gaily running up the steps, being seen by Madame, was met and embraced by her with every demonstration of joy, even before the door closed.

Rosa's errand, which was to deliver a packet to a gentleman from Mrs. Woudbe, explained to Madame the situation she was in; but nothing, she declared, ever astonished her so much as the secret made of it, which Rosa did not think right immediately to explain; and Madame, who was a very good distinguisher between what was, and what was not fit to be told, acquiesced.

Eleven, twelve, one, two, three o'clock struck; no dear natural brother appeared. Mrs. Woudbe, fearing some accident had happened to her jewels, her companion, or her natural brother, drove up to the door; and hearing, to her astonishment, that the former were yet in Rosa's possession, directed her to carry them home, and proceeded to pay some morning visits.

On Rosa's return to Portman-square, she found a letter addressed to her, which, as she saw by the hand writing, was for Mrs. Woudbe, she delivered as soon as that lady returned from her visits.

This letter had a terrible effect on poor Mrs. Woudbe; she had the horrors, the hysterics, and every thing a

fine lady, very much vexed; in full health ought to, or indeed, could have;—the ungrateful natural brother, charged her with designing to betray him, by having sent her companion with a spy;—he even, unnatural wretch! threatened to expose and betray her to her husband!

The innocent woman, who well knew she had set no spies on him, and who trembled at his threat, flew to Rosa, and read more of the letter than could be possibly understood by any but herself.

Rosa, in her zeal to pacify the agitation of Mrs. Woudbe, acknowledged, she believed her coach was followed by a gentleman from Portman-square; and that she afterwards saw him standing opposite Madame La Croix's house, but insisted he could have no motive to watch Mrs. Woudbe's brother.

Poor Mrs. Woudbe remained in the greatest possible consternation, till at length, her husband going out, she begged Rosa to walk to a coach-stand with her, and having set her down at Madame La Croix's, left her there, while she, it is presumed, went to enquire after her natural brother.

Madame La Croix's kindness to Rosa seemed to have increased, even in the last short absence; she offered to make her a present of a beautiful dress, for the grand night at Mrs. Woudbe's, and press'd it on her with a warmth of attachment, which, though not accepted, was yet done in so feeling a manner she could not be angry at the offer; the dress, however, was very pretty; Rosa asked the price; it was infinitely cheaper than she could have expected; and whatever were Madame's motives, she did not ask half the original cost; but pretty, it certainly was, and the temptation was not to be resisted, more especially as it was so great a bargain; and as Mrs. Woudbe's present was yet unchanged, it was but just that credit should be done her generosity on so public an occasion.

Mrs. Woudbe returned in a state of unspeakable anxiety; she had not succeeded in her search after her angry brother, and was obliged to have recourse to her old mode of writing to him, which indeed would have
been

been most expeditious, as well as certain, had her impatience not outrun reflection.

Mr. Woudbe, who was at home first, had heard news respecting the Earl of Gauntlet, he was so impatient to impart to his wife, that he was a little peevish at her absence ;—“ It was an odd hour, he thought for her to *walk* out ; but the preparations for an entertainment, which was to be graced by all that was either noble or ignoble among the first people, by the beautiful Lady Charlottes, Louisas, Georginas, Carolines, &c. &c. and by all the half-mad, and half-dead sprigs of quality, was an apology for every thing ; so the tea and the news were served together.

The scandalous chronicle run thus :—The rightful heir of the noble family of the Gauntlets, had been spirited away, nobody but the present Earl and Countess, and their confidential friend Sir Solomon Mushroom, could guess how or where ; and he now suddenly appeared to claim his alienated rights, supported by his mother and her family, who were also in the female line, direct descendants from the same noble stock : the question was to be brought to issue the ensuing term ; the great lawyers were all engaged, and public curiosity on the stretch.

As nothing in Rosa's opinion could be so unlikely, as that her patroness should be privy to a base action, she only felt interested in the event of the news ; as no doubt the claimant was an impostor, and her respected friend would triumph over her enemies, since the barbarous truth, that such a woman had enemies, could not be controverted.

Mrs. Woudbe's varying cheek spoke more eloquently of her feelings, in her husband's intelligence ; and what most astonished Rosa was, the ease with which she gave up the interest of her dear and charming friend, the Countess of Gauntlet, as well as discovering that she was a much more perfect mistress of the subject, than either Mr. Woudbe or the scandalous chronicle.

“ The Earl and Countess of Gauntlet were,” she said, “ two grand impostors, and the developement of their actions would explain to the world a mystery that
had

had long puzzled it, which was, the continued intimacy between the Gauntlets and the Mushrooms."

"Good God! madam," interrupted Rosa, her face and neck glowing with outraged friendship, "do *you*, *you* who are honoured with the confidence of Lady Gauntlet, implicate her in so abominable a transaction! *you* who are her bosom friend! *you* who—"

Mr. Woudbe took the word from Rosa, and with an air of irony proceeded—" *you* on whom for more than a twelvemonth she condescended not only to live herself, but to intrude to your table her best friend, one of the first men in the kingdom, when he had no dinner of his own, and when she did not chuse to give him any herself."

Mrs. Woudbe smiled, and Rosa, unable to comprehend, and unwilling to believe, left the good couple to themselves, and retired to hate and detest the impertinent Montreville.

The next day, it may be concluded, all was right between the affectionate sister and her natural brother; for the jewels were gone, tranquillity restored, and all the attention of the family taken up with the approaching masquerade.

As the day drew near, Mrs. Woudbe recollected, that among the number of men to whom she had sent tickets, as mementos of old acquaintance, there might be some not so nice in their connection, or so strict in their respect to her, as to refuse to gratify the curiosity of naughty creatures, who were not of a rank to sin with impunity: now this idea was excessively distressing, and she consulted her husband on the means most likely to prevent women of no character from contaminating her roof.

Mr. Woudbe was pleased at her nicety, but in the present state of things he thought it would be an Herculean labour, "For," said he, "you would not affront any of the great men who have been so kind to you."

"Certainly not," replied the lady; "but I would prevent their affronting me, by bringing any of their new favorites under my nose."

"Nay,

"Nay, my dear, you are now talking gibberish," answered the astonished husband; "but suppose I stand at the door and take the tickets myself."

"And what end will that answer?"

"Every end you can wish; for I defy a wanton woman to escape *my* detection, if she wore a mask a foot thick."

Mrs. Woudbe was glad to turn her front to the fire; for, though she had, on the experience of some score of years, reason to doubt her husband's sagacity, at discovering a wanton woman, even without a mask, as, in the zeal of his offer, he happened to fix his eyes directly into hers, conscience, which cannot be stifled by all persons, at all times, gave a twinge which occasioned Mrs. Woudbe to complain of cold and to stir up the fire.

Mr. Woudbe thought again and again on the offer he had spontaneously made, and the more he pondered on the business, the more he was pleased with himself for hitting on an expedient, so suitable to his own abilities, and so calculated to prevent the delicacy of his wife from being outraged by improper company.

Mrs. Woudbe, considering that the office of door-keeper, where her husband would not keep out, but let in a few of the good friends who had conferred many an unknown favour on him, would actually keep him too much engaged to make observations, applauded the readiness of his invention, and the obliging motive that suggested it;—so, that every thing might be in the true spirit of masquerade, a porter's great coat was ordered for the master of the house, and his station fixed in the hall.

Nothing could exceed the taste of the decorations, and entertainment of this grand night.

Rosa, who could apprehend nothing improper in the part assigned her, which was to receive the masks, most of whom she knew, and all of whom she concluded, were people of rank and character, was as highly delighted at a sight so novel and harmless, as the grotesque and whimsical appearance of the figures who passed her in succession, many of whom paid the most extravagant compliment on her beauty.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woudbe wore a mask and Domino herself, great part of the evening, but changed her dress, and unmasked before supper.

At an hour past midnight the rooms were, as usual, so crowded, that Rosa, who, spoken to by every body, was also obliged to answer every body, overcome by heat and fatigue, left the rooms, and leaning over the rail of the stair bannister, was fanning herself, when a figure, she had before observed to hover near her, in a black robe, started over to personify Night, approached her.

"Beauty like yours," said the figure, "cannot escape the eye of admiration, but under my cover."

"Really!" said a barrister, who had also continued near her, "my brief informs me that the most radiant beauty may sometimes retire from the gaze of admiration, while the sun is at meridian."

"Perhaps so," returned Night sharply; "but there are whose actions require the cover of night, even though their beauty be scorched by the garish sun."

There was a rude acrimony in the manner of the last speaker, which disgusted, and without exactly knowing why, alarmed our heroine.

"I can have no part in this important dispute," said she.

"You are the object of it," said Night, still more sharply.

"Oh certainly," joined the Barrister, "you are the cause before the court, and you cannot be dismissed without a verdict."

"I am not masked, gentlemen," said Rosa, with dignity.

"Report says otherwise," retorted Night.

"Report is a common liar," cried the Barrister;

"I will not believe it.

"You may possibly mistake this for wit, gentlemen, but as I do not comprehend it, I beg to pass."

The Barrister bowing made way, but incorrigible Night was immovable; she however passed by, and returned to the rooms, followed by the two masks.

The crowd in all parts of the house was so great, and every kind of distinction so lost in the different characters;

characters ; the noise, so incessant from clever people, who would find out every body, and from some, more clever, whom nobody could find out ; from theatrical people, who purposely sang out of tune ; from musical parties who could not sing in tune ; from pedlars, barrow girls, link boys, and reel dancers ; that Rosa, heartily sick of what was for the first hour amusing, attempted to retire as soon as Mrs. Woudbe unmasked.

On ascending a back stair, she felt her gown touched behind, and looking back, beheld the black robed Night, and heard him sigh, " Miss Walsingham."

" Who are you, Sir ?" she asked, " and why are you here ? this part of the house is not open for company."

" No recess, however private, can exclude Night," he answered ; " and with me it is eternal night !"

" Who are you, Sir ?" repeated Rosa."

" One whom *you* have robbed of all the blessings of existence, but who would die with pleasure to snatch you from the gulph into which you are plunged."

" The gulph ! I understand you not ; I desire not to understand you ;—you intrude Sir ; this place leads to the private apartments of the family ; indeed you intrude."

" I know," replied the mask, " the voice that warns depravity of its certain destruction, must always intrude ; but Miss Walsingham has one friend, who would yet save her ; who would recal her to innocence and peace."

" Recal ! I know not," haughtily replied Rosa, " who it is that dares, under so mean a disguise, thus insult my honor and my feelings ? but

" — know, immortal truth shall mock thy toil ;

" Immortal truth shall bid the shaft recoil

" With rage retorted, wing the deadly dart,

" And empty all its poison in thy heart."

and she attempted to pass. *

" Would to God," said the mask, " the lines were more applicable to your sentiments than to your wit ! but if you are innocent, why an inmate here ? why at La Croix's ? why, oh why taught to allure and betray by the Messalina of the age !"

" Good

"Good God!" cried Rosa, in an agony, "must I hear all this? have I no protector nigh?—who is this mean detractor?—this marked—"

"Behold him!"—It was Montreville.

Rosa shrieked.

"You have alarmed the house," said he, collectedly.

"I will alarm the world, rather than insult my own honour by holding converse with *you*—equally the object of my contempt and indignation, what right have you to watch my steps? to invade my privacy, and wound my ears with falsehood? meanly presuming on my unprotected state."

"Unprotected! *you* unprotected! do you not know Lady Gauntlet?"

"I am proud that I do."

"Very well, Madam,—and you are the companion—the confidant—the private ambassadress of Mrs. Woudbe?"

"Granted—and what is *your* objection?"

"An inmate with the vile La Croix."

"The vile La Croix!—but there are praises that censure, and censures that praise."

"Oh Miss Walsingham, cruel and undone woman!"—

No language can point the variety of emotions, which only could support the spirit of our heroine at this moment; she attempted to ascend the stairs—he held her gown, and hiding his face in it, actually wept.

Conscious innocence and injured honour was not thus to be appeased; she rushed by him, at the expence of her new dress, and joined the company with pale face, disordered hair, and torn dress.

The rooms were by this time much thinner than they had been; many of the visitors were gone—and those who remained, were in the supper rooms, unmasked; the Barrister offered to conduct her to Mrs. Woudbe, in his own proper person Lord Aron Horsenagog—but she was unable to walk, and trembled so violently, that she accepted his offer to lead her to a seat, and take a glass of lemonade.

Lord Aron seated himself by her, and then, for the first time, observing her dishabille, exclaimed with surprise,

prise, "What is the meaning of this? have we had a Tarquin here, *under cover of Night?*"

Rosa blushed deeply: his lordship spoke with particular emphasis to her more particular feelings. After steadily observing her a few moments, he again called the blood into her cheeks, by asking what Montreville had done? "Come," he added, "I know he is an old favourite of yours."

"Indeed!" answered she, with renovated spirits, "did he tell you so?"

"N—n—not absolutely, but one must be blind not to perceive it; and though love be sometimes hoodwinked, and I certainly love you very much; it is at other times clear-sighted enough—as for instance, I again tell you, Montreville is an old favourite of yours—deny it if you dare."

"I detest him."

"One is apt to do that, when an old friend is so wicked as to get a new one."

"You are mistaken, my lord; I have seen Mr. Montreville before—but—I dislike him more than—"

"More than me, I hope."

"More than any body."

"You are so handsome, you have a right to dislike any thing, except your own face; but there are some foolish women who think Montreville tolerable—— Here is our hostess coming to inquire after you—shall we ask her opinion?"

Mrs. Woudbe was really sauntering down the room, seemingly on the look about for something or somebody, and, without waiting Rosa's answer, Lord Aron asked her if she knew young Montreville?

Rosa's own surprise and confusion, when she saw him in the coffee-room of the opera-house, could not exceed that manifested by the seasoned Mrs. Woudbe.

"Know him—yes;—no—that is, I have seen—I do not—"

"Well," demanded Lord Aron, without seeming to attend to her embarrassment; "and what do you think of him? is he not a devilish fine fellow?"

Mrs. Woudbe's confusion was even painful to herself, and could not escape the observation of Rosa; but all parties

parties were at that moment relieved by the entrance of Lady Gauntlet and her party, as a group of Turks, male and female—the latter covered with jewels.

Every body crowded round;—half a dozen prettier women were seldom seen together than Lady Lowder, the Earl's daughters, and Miss Mushroom; and they must have shared the admiration with any body but the Countess of Gauntlet. Their escorts were the Earl of Gauntlet, his sons, (Lord Delworth and the Major) Sir Solomon Mushroom, and Sir Jacob Lydear; and these followed by a group of more elegant figures, who did not unmask.

Happily, as Rosa in her then state of mind thought it, the whole group, followed by the crowd, passed close without noticing her—not even the good Lady Gauntlet sent one eye-beam towards the place where she sat, alone—Lord Aron having gone to pay his respects to one of the masks.

Lady Lowder's jewels and her sister's pearls were particularly splendid; their dresses tasteful, their rouge well laid on, and their hearts perfectly in unison with the gaiety of their appearance; and they were, particularly Miss Mushroom, so caressed by her patroness, that if ever the baneful passion of envy entered the bosom of Rosa, it was at this moment, when contrasting her own internal wretchedness with their content—her deranged and half-torn dress, with their elegance and fashion—her dependance and poverty, with their power and riches.

Thus dejected, and in the midst of elegance and profusion, more deeply sighing than when poverty and even want menaced, she sat, with her eyes fixed on the ground, lost to every object present.

Two ladies, whom the shew had not attracted, happened to be seated exactly behind her, one of them, moved by the evident despondence of her looks, addressed her, and in an accent to which her heart was familiar, "broad Scotch," hoped she was not ill, though the fatigues of the evening must have wearied one whose attentions were so very obliging.

Rosa bowed, as fixing her languid eyes earnestly on the lady's face, she endeavoured to recollect features which struck her as having some where known.

"Dear

"Dear Angus," cried the other lady, "you see every body has followed them to the supper-room; we shall lose lady Hopely."

"Lady Hopely!" cried Rosa, starting up, her face and gesture all animation.

The ladies, who had not before observed her deranged dress, now looked first at her, then at each other; the one, who was addressed as Miss Angus, and who was sister to the Honourable Mr. Angus, cast a glance of pity at her, and of wonder at her companion, while she, "the Miss Bruce" we have before mentioned, who had the misfortune to have a very large pair of dull, near-sighted eyes, put up her glass, and bursting into a loud laugh, put her arm under that of Miss Angus, and pulled her away.

Rosa's eyes followed them in search of Lady Hopely; they walked out of that room into another—still she followed, where, chatting with some of the last party who entered, she beheld the woman who honoured the British peerage.

Fixed like a statue, Rosa stood waiting for the breaking up the conversation in which she saw Lady Hopely engaged, when, the young ladies having joined her, they came down the room towards where she placed herself, so as to attract her ladyship's notice.

The younger of the ladies was speaking to her on a subject, which, though exceedingly laughed at by the large-eyed lady, rather seemed to shock than amuse either Lady Hopely or Miss Angus. Rosa continued earnestly watching their approach, when she saw them start, and heard the dull-eyed lady, pointing towards her, say, "That is she."

Lady Hopely stepped back with surprise: Rosa's heart darted in gladness from her eyes; she dropped a low, respectful courtesy, and motioned to approach; but was ready to expire with mortification, when she saw the benevolent features, which, but one moment before, were irradiated by smiles and good-humour, contracting into cold reserve, and the most repelling disregard, as she passed without taking the smallest notice of her repeated courtesy, and walked down the room in earnest conversation with Miss Angus.

The

The first idea which struck Rosa when she lost sight of Lady Hopely, was, that, as her interview with that Lady was so short, she had forgotten her, and she hastened after her to make herself known, but was again repelled by her look and manner, which had so much marked displeasure and contempt in them, as proved that, still to be forgotten, would have been much better than to be remembered with the disgust her looks portrayed."

"And she lives here," said Lady Hopely, in an accent of angry surprise, and turning away, "does she?"

Rosa could no longer press after Lady Hopely; but retiring directly, sick at heart, to her chamber, threw herself, without undressing, on her bed, where, after struggling almost to suffocation against an hysterical affection, she was happily relieved by a copious shower of tears, in which she indulged, till broad day-light witnessed the anguish which, *under cover of night*, had lacerated her soul, and till the last carriage having driven from the door, the wearied master and mistress, and their harrassed domestics, retired to rest, when, the house becoming silent, exhausted nature sunk into an oblivion of care.

CHAP. III.

Shewing, that although the world is so full of large libraries, wise men, and good-natured women, it is possible for an innocent girl to be proved guilty of every other crime, after she has been convicted of—Poverty!!!

WHAT, said the inimitable writer of the tragedy of all tragedies, Tom Thumb—what is a goose pye to him who has no taste! and what, says the inimitable author of this fine novel, is the masquerade ball of a disciple of notoriety after it is over.

The

The dreadful lassitude, however, which rest left on Mrs. Woudbe's spirits, was elysium to the anguish which preyed not only on the ethereal, but on the corporeal substance of the poor Beggar. It was now, for the first time, that she was sensible of a pang more poignant than despair; it was ill-requited love—female pride, wounded in the most tender part—a stab to that most laudable motive for self-esteem, the having distinguished, from the herd of mankind, as its primary object, a man of honour, of principle, and of humanity; it was worse, if worse there could be, than all these combined; and the moment that unsealed her eyes from a sleep which had more of disease in it than natural rest, deluged them with tears.

She arose with violent pains in her head and limbs, and, scarcely able to support herself, reached the breakfast-room.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Woudbe were yet stirring, nor indeed very few of the servants. She, with difficulty, swallowed one cup of tea; and the footman who waited happening to meet her eye, with an expression in his of concern, her low spirits sunk still lower; she burst into tears, and exclaimed, “At last the blow is struck—I am going to die.”

The man, with great feeling and good-nature, answered, he hoped not; that, to be sure, such a kick-up as they had the last night, was enough to kill every body; but a few hours quiet rest would be the best doctor.

Rosa again said she should die—it was impossible for her ever to have a quiet rest more; and leaning back her aching head, shewed so altered a countenance, that the man, fearing she was actually going to make good her words, ran to alarm the house-keeper, who, just up, waddled into the room. All Mr. Woudbe's servants, his wife's woman and footman excepted, were of his own selection; they were therefore so far different from the household domestics of many of their gay neighbours, as to be really good for something! Mrs. Comfit, the house-keeper, besides great skill in all culinary management, was so much of a doctress, that she kept a medicine-chest for the use of the family; and, by

her skill in curing colds, sore throats, corns, and the tooth-ache, saved the bills of a house-apothecary.

"Bless her pretty face!" cried Mrs. Comfit, "she is actually in a fever;—oh, lud! how her poor pulse do gallopi, gallopi! You must go to bed, Miss."

"I shall go to my grave," cried Rosa.

"God forbid!" said the house-keeper.

"Amen! amen!" joined the house-maid. "If a fever gets into this here house, after such piping-hot doings as we had last night, the Lord knows where it will stop: I think mistress should be wakeded and tould about it;—I dare for to say as she will order Miss to be moved out on the house."

"God forbid!" again cried Mrs. Comfit, "that I should have the honour and happiness to manage a family where honest sick folks are moved out of the house when they can't help themselves; for in that case, Mary, your turn or mine might come next."

"Amen! amen!" again said Mary: she did not think of that before; but, however, she hoped mistress would order Miss a nuss, because she was herself mortal afraid of a fever.

"Afraid or not, Mary, she must be got to bed, and I will mix a few antimonial draughts; and if that don't do, she shall have a blister; if that don't do, she shall have James's powders; and if that don't do, why I believe we must have a poticary;—but only feel her poor pulse gallopi, gallopi!—come, Miss, you must be got to bed."

Rosa being kindly assisted by the house-keeper, and Mary, by her orders, left to administer the antimony, laid her heavy and disordered head down, with a strong presentiment she never should rise again. The strange confusion in her brain, her parched mouth, and the trembling lassitude of her limbs, all, Mrs. Comfit declared, prognosticated a strong fever; and she proved so good an augur, that, by nine in the evening, when Mrs. Woudbe arose to breakfast, and inquired after her humble companion, she was told of the indisposition which now rendered it impossible for Rosa to rise.

Mrs. Woudbe certainly was concerned, and instantly went to the chamber where Rosa lay, with a thousand
vague

vague ideas floating on her brain, and as many horrible figures before her eyes, but still sensible enough to understand any questions put to her.

Mrs. Woudbe approached, and inquired, in an accent of great feeling, if Rosa had received an inclosure for her from her dear brother. The faint negative to her anxious question was a grievous disappointment : she hoped Rosa would be better in the morning, and gave particular charge every possible care and attention should be paid to——her letters !

The next morning, that is, at three P. M. as soon as Mrs. Woudbe arose, she renewed her visit and her inquiries, but found she had no longer a companion in Rosa, whose delirium was so strong, she did not even know her.

Nothing in life was so terrible to Mrs. Woudbe as the idea of death ; and had her house not been large enough to allow of her living in a part quite remote from the sick chamber, she would have even preferred the old seat in Dorsetshire to remaining near it. She however, continued her solicitude respecting any letters that might arrive to the invalid, but entirely discontinued her visits.

Mrs. Comfit having gone through her proposed process, applied to Mr. Woudbe for a poticary. Mr. Woudbe went a step further, and ordered a physician ; who, to the great dismay of the whole family, pronounced the patient to be in a malignant fever, of the contagious kind.

Never was any thing so horridly unfortunate. Mrs. Woudbe's masquerade was a sort of visit she had a right to return ; and there were a *few* people of high rank, who, while her elegant entertainment were fresh on their memory, and while they continued to laugh at the idea of her husband being her door-keeper, actually did let them both in.

To leave her house, and of course leave town, at such a critical period, was the most afflicting of all possible things, except the risk of catching a malignant fever by staying in it. As to removing Rosa, a measure suggested by her women, and approved by herself, Mr. Woudbe laid his flat negative against that ; and

the poor unfortunate lady, unable herself to determine, asked the advice of her, not quite so esteemed friend as she had been, the Countess of Gauntlet, who happened just then to drop in; and who, if there had not been some secret reasons which militated against Mrs. Woudbe's cordial amity with that lady, would have won her heart for ever, by an invitation to her house at Windsor. As, however, the idea of living for ever so short a time, where she might enjoy the

“ ——— Sweetest of all earthly things,
 “ To gaze on princes, and to talk of kings,”

was delightful, and pungent as her secret reasons were, they did not militate against *present* profession of regard for the divine Countess, she accepted the invitation, leaving Mr. Woudbe, who had not the same dread of a malignant fever, in the house with the supposed dying Rosa; not indeed, without great expression of concern on the part of both ladies, and strict orders, if any letters should happen to be left at Portman-square, for poor Miss Walsingham, they might be forwarded to Mrs. Woudbe, to be *taken care of*. After which the ladies set off, with a retinue suitable to the rank of the one, and the pride of the other.

Mr. Woudbe was what his wife thought, a mighty silly, but what the world thought, a good sort of a man enough. Finding Rosa grew daily worse, or as Mrs. Comfit expressed it, drew near to death's door, he called in a consultation of physicians, who all wrote for medicines, which were poured down her throat; notwithstanding which, to the astonishment of the family, her youth successfully struggled against both doctors and disease; and as soon as her strength would admit, she was, by Mrs. Woudbe's directions, removed, with a maid servant, to lodgings at Hampstead, that the house might be fumigated with vinegar, and thoroughly purified before she entered it.

Mrs. Woudbe's residence under the same roof with Lady Gauntlet, had been extremely productive of the harvest of friendship: the Countess, who was always too wise to make confidante in what particularly concerned herself, happened at this period to have so
 many

many affairs on hand, in which several other people were as much interested as herself, and which were worked by so many secret springs, and had so many jarring interests to reconcile, that a confidante, in whose discretion as well as fidelity she could rely, was a real acquisition; and it also happened that a certain grand project of Mrs. Woudbe's, no less than unmarrying the silly commoner, Mr. Woudbe, and making herself a peeress, by giving her divorced hand to another person high in her esteem, was, unknown to Lady Gauntlet, so oddly connected with her grand schemes, that both ladies were, from very different motives, interested in the same event; the visit at Windsor was, therefore, only a prelude to one the Countess invited her friend to make at Delworth House, a family seat situated in the remote part of Cumberland, where her ladyship was obliged to go, on account of her son's marriage, and where she was also willing to make one more visit, probably with some secret sentiment it would be the last.

Delworth House gave the second title to the Gauntlet family; and though their principal estates lay in Ireland, and they esteemed themselves Hibernians, it was preferred by the Countess to the family mansion at Gauntlet within sixty miles of Dublin, for her summer excursion, rather than residence; as six weeks or two months were the longest period of the Earl's absence from court.

Miss Mushroom, whom the fates, the good Earl of Gauntlet, and Sir Solomon Mushroom, destined to give her fair hand to the heir of the former, Lord Delworth, had twice been crossed,—once in love, and once in ambition; great, indeed, were the sacrifices her kind uncle would have made, to induce the object of her affection to make her happy in love,—and great were the disbursements he intended, to gratify her ambition; but both the favoured, insensible men, had declined the offered bliss, with this difference of effect, the loss of the lover left a melancholy regret on the mind of the lady, the desertion of the lord filled her fair bosom with rage, and inspired an insatiable desire of revenge.

Every body knew Lord Denningcourt's poverty,—his father's having cut off the entail of the estate, and given every thing in his power to his widow; and every body were a little suspicious that his sole motive for addressing Miss Mushroom, was to mend his fortune; therefore it was that the young lady resolved, as his old castle stood within two short miles of Lord Gauntlet's fine seat, to strike him as dead as envy could strike a faithless lord, by having her wedding celebrated with the utmost magnificence under, as she wittily expressed it, his very nose; and an adherence to this lady-like resolution, was the only article she stipulated for, in consenting to an arrangement which the Earl had convinced Sir Solomon Mushroom, would not only unite in present, but secure in future, the mutual interest of their families.

Earl Gauntlet was too courtly, and too much in the habit of being of every body's opinion, to say no to a lady; what objection, indeed, could be made to the wish of a young bride, to pass her honey-moon where she expected to live a great part of her life; for that the young couple should reside much more in the country than the Earl and Countess, from the nature of their several engagements could do, was a part of his lordship's arrangement.

All things being thus agreed, preparations were making for the journey of the family of the Gauntlets to Delworth, immediately after the birth-day, whither Sir Solomon Mushroom and his family were also to follow with all decent expedition, as soon as the bridal paraphernalia were ready.

On this grand occasion, and on some others not so grand but more important, it was, that Lady Gauntlet wanted a female confidante; for, and it is recorded to her honour, the minds of her own daughters were tenaciously kept by her, as pure and un sullied as their persons were lovely.

Lord Delworth, a young man of no character, who had never been famous for any good action, but obeying the commands of her, who commanded all the men she knew; nor for any thing bad, but contracting debts it was impossible for him to pay, having been lately
incon-

inconvenienced by the demands of his creditors, was well enough pleased to marry a fine girl, who brought eighty thousand pounds into the family, thirty of which he was himself to touch; and of course Miss Mushroom had no reason to complain of the coldness of her third and last lover.

Before Mrs. Woudbe accepted Lady Gauntlet's invitation, it was but decent to consult Mr. Woudbe, who, for form sake, was also invited; though, as it was now May, and she knew he had projected great improvements in a new purchased estate in the neighbourhood of his son-in-law, with whom he had engaged to pass part of the summer, she expected what really happened, that he would prefer visiting his daughter, to an invitation from a lord.

Mrs. Woudbe was incapable of such a preference; but she had also another person to consult, who being of opinion that she could not be better than at Delworth, with the Countess of Gauntlet and her family, she arrived at her house in Portman-square, as soon as the fever was scoured out, to make additions to her wardrobe, and try her credit at the jeweller's; all her own diamonds and pearls being so entirely locked up, pressing and urgent as was her want of them on this occasion, that it was in vain to think of them.

Mr. Woudbe's fortune and credit were so well known, she had the happiness of succeeding to the extent of her wishes; and though having given away the thousand pounds, received from her husband, to prevent what he abhorred, tradesmen's bills, she had shewn away on credit the last three months, yet nothing was more easy than to go on contracting debts, or any thing more natural than for her to hold in infinite contempt, the anger of an husband, from whom she was certain of being soon emancipated, and on whom, in her new arrangement, she would look down.

Meanwhile our heroine was suffering under all the ills of internal anguish, impaired constitution, and personal mortification.

The house, where she was placed, by recommendation of a physician, at Hampstead, was kept by a widow, who received ladies and gentlemen, boarders;

most of the former were precise maidens, upright vestals, whose souls recoiled as much from impurity, as if certain propensities were, as the celebrated Nan Catley once said, "to be caught;" and of the latter, one was a busy prating curate; the others trading valetudinarians, who walked to their compting houses in the morning, and returned by a sixpenny stage at four, to dine.

Rosa's weak and slow recovery, her profound melancholy, and natural coincidence of manners, were well calculated to fix her, an unnoticed and unobtrusive member of any society. She neither interrupted the garrulity of the elder, nor the formal vanity of the younger ladies; neither did she, by attending in any respect to her own weak health, at all inconvenience either of the city gentlemen; the curate indeed, who added to his broad stare, and common place wit, affected admiration of her beauty, faded as it then appeared, had no reason to boast of the impression he made; and it was to his pique, on that account, she owed the disagreeables in which she was soon after involved.

The curate made it his particular business to find out our heroine, or rather to find her patronesses out; and such was the universal odium affixed to the character of the two ladies who protected her, it was, on a consultation held in the apartment of one of the ladies, to which all the boarders were summoned, decided, that Miss Walsingham, recommended, to his great discredit by Dr. P, as a boarder to Mrs. Davis, was, on account of the lady with whom she had lived, unfit for the society of the other inmates; who agreed, nem. con. to insist on her immediate removal; or, in failure thereof, to make arrangements for quitting the house in a body themselves.

Mrs. Davis's livelihood depended on her boarders, and her character being her chief recommendation, she was exceedingly distressed at an alternative, which, in her humble opinion, was both cruel and unjust; virtue is "always the same beloved contented thing" to congenial souls; hers was such, and she grieved at the hard task imposed on her by necessity, of hurting the feelings

ings of an amiable creature, whose slow recovery from her fever was attended with symptoms of a less violent, but more certain period to existence; this she represented in vain to the austere judges; all she could obtain in favour of the offensive Rosa, was three days grace, during which period she could see Dr. P. and consult with him on the most proper means to be adopted in the removal of his patient, with the least injury to her health and feelings.

The ladies, who saw no necessity for the least delicacy in the business, consented to this delay with a very ill grace, and not without solemnly enacting, that no part of the pure community should sit in the parlour, except during meals, from which they should retire immediately to the ladies' apartment, where these salutary laws were made, without, on any occasion, opening their lips to the suspected party.

The last clause rather puzzled one of the founders of the statutes; for, as he was carver, and sat in that capacity at the bottom of the table, he did not see how he could do justice to Mrs. Davis, or her boarders, without sometimes addressing the latter. As this was a point, no less difficult than necessary to be settled, it occasioned no small ferment; the ladies, as usual, in affairs of female delicacy, all spoke together; the gentlemen not at all, till the curate, allowing speech was indispensable in the gentleman who wielded the carving knife, proposed to fix the exact latitude of conversation to be addressed to the naughty invalid; and it was agreed, without a dissenting voice, to be confined to eight words "shall I help you to some of this;" and, accordingly at the next meal, Rosa found her chair left at a dignified distance from any other seat, and sat, without being addressed, drank to, or noticed, save in the exact words before mentioned, "*shall I help you to some of this.*"

As the Beggar had that within her, which "passeth shew," she did not, at the first meal, notice, the reserve of her nice companions; but when she found herself constantly alone in the parlour, and when one observation drew on another, surprize at the oddity of their behaviour was much stronger than mortification

at their neglect; to be alone was far from a punishment; to be silent was, since her illness, become habitual; but, when the second day came, and she could not help seeing the scornful tosses of the female heads, the contemptuous projection of their under lips, and their eyes studiously turned away, together with the dead silence of the valetudinarians, and the pert sneer of the curate, it was impossible not to feel hurt as well as amazed.

Conscious of the rectitude of her own heart, as well as the innocence of her actions, it was difficult for her to devise the cause of an alteration so sudden, in people whom she could not have offended; and she was still less likely to attribute it to that protection which she considered as an honour, and procured by peculiar interference of Providence in her favour; but ignorance of the cause, could not shield her from the humbling effect; and after revolving it over, till she was sick of her situation, herself, and the world, it at length struck her, that she had been, by some accident, recognized for what she originally was, "a Beggar," and that the flights she now met with, were to be ascribed to that natural respect to circumstances, which is inherent to little minds. Far from feeling depressed from this idea, her spirit rose; "They despise *me* for my poverty," said she, exultingly, "while I pity them for the want of talent, candour, sentiment and charity, which heaven has given me, and which I feel for them."

Thus reconciled to her situation, and at peace with her enemies, she thought not of removing out of reach of their malevolence, but was sitting, a book half closed before her, and her eyes fixed on its cover, when Lady Gauntlet's carriage, with three out riders, one in, and two out of, livery, stopped at the door, and her ladyship, accompanied by Mrs. Woudbe, alighted.

The little curate, who longed for a benefice; the ladies who longed for an equipage; and even the valetudinarian, who longed for nothing, were all in motion; and the former, spite of the sarcasms of the lady in whose apartments the laws were made, ran down to offer

offer his humble service to the woman, of whom everybody talked, whom many execrated, and all condemned, but whom, nevertheless, it was impossible to see and not admire.

Lady Gauntlet's mouth was the natural residence of smiles, and she was so practised in the art of fascination, that no feeling of her heart ever appeared in her countenance, to the prejudice of the fine harmony of her features; she therefore sweetly thanked the little curate for the civility, which she contrived to decline, with more grace than it could have been accepted by a less happy counterfeit, and proceeded directly to our heroine, to whom she appeared like the radiant sun after a long winter, and whom her embrace warmed, not only into feeling, but ecstasy.

Among the rest of the fleeting blessings of life, the poor Beggar had with pangs of regret only inferior to that which the ingratitude of Montreville inflicted, sighed over the transient blessing of Lady Gauntlet's friendship, for transient it had appeared, as not once since her senses returned, after her delirium, had she been honoured by her notice; too exquisite and too grateful, therefore, to a heart from which every comfort had flown, was this dear and unexpected happiness, and its effect on her weak frame was equal to that of a dire calamity, — she fainted in her arms.

"Yes," said Mrs. Woudbe, in a voice half choaked with rage, "the barbarous cats have killed the poor girl; and you, Mr. Parson, could you not have said something to them about the moat in their own eyes."

Mrs. Davis, who wept over the interesting creature, whose pale cheeks could suffer little change in her present lifeless state, frightened at Mrs. Woudbe's violence, lest it should draw on her the vengeance of the "Mr. Parson," on whom she darted her indignant glances, cast a look of reproach at Doctor P. who had accompanied the ladies in the carriage, and followed them into the house.

The Doctor whispered lady Gauntlet, who whispered her friend, who was immediately silent; but who, while the, equally enraged Countess was all smiles,
continued

continued her scornful and fiery glances at every person she saw.

Rosa recovered to a continued sense of happiness: Lady Gauntlet was really affected; and as *she* was implicated in the mortifications inflicted on her *companion*, Mrs. Woudbe declared she never had felt so much in her life.

“Come, my dear Miss Walsingham,” said the Countess, tenderly, “let us remove you from this unfriendly house—you must return to town;—but we will give you air: you shall go with my friend Mrs. Woudbe to my seat in the north; there you shall have air and exercise; and be treated with the respect due to your family and connections.”

The air of dignity and elevated tone with which her ladyship spoke, had the intended effect; it struck the little curate dumb, and humbled the tabbies, who, crowding over each other, were listening on the stairs; and, what was better than all, gave Mrs. Davis a consequence with her arrogant boarders, which was of permanent advantage.

Rosa—but faint would be every attempt to describe its effect on her;—ignorant of the real motives for her ladyship’s dignified, or for Mrs. Woudbe’s outrageous resentment, she could only ascribe it to their affectionate concern for her; and, as the Countess well knew the real circumstances of her family, the elevation of it before those whom she conceived had taken such trouble to make her feel its meanness, were equal proofs of her wisdom and kindness.

The truth of the matter was, that Doctor P. had really felt himself so impressed in favour of the young invalid—so charmed with the innocence of mind and mildness of manners, which appeared to more advantage under a roof where he could not reasonably expect to find any traits of the kind, that he had recommended her in a very particular manner to Mrs. Davis, and felt himself implicated in the injurious conduct of the boarders, at the same moment that his esteem was increased, and his compassion raised for the fair sufferer, by the account Mrs. Davis gave of her sweet temper, weakness, and low spirits. He had often

ten witnessed the selfishness of Mrs. Woudbe's disposition, and knew, that to remove the young companion on the simple plea of ill-treatment, would neither interest nor affect her, except he made himself the herald of unwelcome truths, and convinced her that the affront was, as indeed was true, levelled at herself.

This, the doctor, who without affectation in any sense was a real philanthropist, resolved to do, rather than expose so amiable a creature to present or future insult. Accordingly, he called to pay Mrs. Woudbe a morning visit for that purpose, and, fortunately for Rosa, his entrance interrupted an important tête-à-tête between that lady and the Countess of Gauntlet.

The doctor, though with all possible respect for the ladies and all possible indignation against the little tatters at Hampstead, so far from softening down the information of Mrs. Davis, rather added a few hints—which had the effect he expected. The concern of Mrs. Woudbe for the poor affronted Rosa was out of all bounds of discretion; that of Lady Gauntlet, such as accorded with the sweet sensibility of her disposition. Both ladies were unanimous in the opinion, that the poor thing should be removed that very day; and the doctor, hinting how honourable to themselves and what an *amende* to the young lady their personal protection of her would be, offered to do himself the honour of joining their party; which being accepted, they agreed Rosa should be brought from Hampstead in lady Gauntlet's coach.

"And now I think of it," cried Mrs. Woudbe, after the doctor was gone, "what can I do with her when I attend your ladyship to the north? I can't leave her with Mr. Woudbe."

"No," replied the Countess, "there might be danger in that."

"None to me, Lady Gauntlet, I assure you," answered Mrs. Woudbe, with a pensive nod.

"Are you *sure*, my good friend?" and Lady Gauntlet looked more than she spoke.

Mrs. Woudbe coloured. "But what then can I do with her?"

"Could

“ Could you *no way* make her useful?—should you have no little commission for her?”

Mrs. Woudbe thought of her natural brother, and hesitated.

“ I know,” said Lady Gauntlet, “ whom it will most unmercifully plague; and therefore, as the poor thing wants air, and there will be *airs* enough at Delworth, suppose she takes the back of my travelling-coach with Lord Gauntlet; my daughters have their maids with them in the landau—your woman, mine, and my lord’s valet, may go in your chaise.”

Although the time was fast approaching when the necessity of caution in Mrs. Woudbe’s correspondence would cease, yet, as that precise time was not yet come, and as she really did not know exactly what to do else with her companion, Lady Gauntlet’s proposal was accepted; and the Countess, who never lost the credit of any of her good actions, informed Rosa of the favour designed her, at the moment, of all others, when her heart was open to the warmest impressions of gratitude.

Mr. Woudbe received Rosa with more feeling than she had ever seen him evince; and though Portman-square was not, in point of air, *Hampstead*, it abounded in every other comfort; and the prospect before her of travelling, and even of living, with the dear good Countess of Gauntlet, gave it the essence of salubrity.

But with all the calm satisfaction with which she contemplated the approaching journey, the drag on all her happiness remained; and time, instead of blunting the edge of those reflections which harrowed her heart, added to their poignancy.

Had the amiable, the generous, the sensible Montreville, once so dear, been lost to her by death, or any common calamity, and had her last recollections of him been those which his fine qualities first inspired in her artless bosom, she might have mourned his loss, have regretted the fate that divided her from her congenial soul, and for ever lamented the inequality of their fortune; but her regret would not, as now, have been chained to just resentment, to a keen sense of injury, to insulted love, wounded pride, and injured honour,

honour, a combination so agonizing was not easily effaced: they faltered on her tongue, faded on her cheek, and corroded in her heart; filled the page of every book she attempted to read, interrupted the course of her laudable employment, loitered in her walks, darkened her days, and haunted her nights.

The fine, easy flow of spirits which sometimes interested, but oftener amused, Mrs. Woudbe, were no more; and that lady's nerves were so exceedingly weak, any thing in the *Penferosa* style affected her. Rosa was therefore left to recover health, as Mrs. Woudbe said, and as Lady Gauntlet agreed was right, in her chamber, where, as she only conversed with the maid, a decent young woman, who was still permitted to attend her, it happened that she remained totally ignorant of the motives for a journey, on which the faint hopes she encouraged of returning health depended.

A few days after Rosa's return to Portman-square, Madame La Croix, who waited on Mrs. Woudbe to receive some particular directions about her dresses, happening to call when that lady was out, begged leave to pay her respects to Miss Walsingham, and was shewn to her chamber. Madame started back on seeing the great alteration in her countenance; and open as Rosa's heart ever was to the appearance of kindness, it was particularly so now, when her health and spirits were equally weak. Madame actually squeezed out one tear of sympathy from the corner of her fine black eye, and Rosa's pale cheeks were deluged in return.

Madame had heard she was to be of the party to the north; "But where," said she, "my poor child! will you be when they return?"

"With Mrs. Woudbe, to be sure."

Madame shook her head.

"Under the kind auspices of Lady Gauntlet."

Madame shrugged her shoulders.

"Have you heard," said she, "of a famous law-suit?"

Rosa had once heard of such a thing from Mrs. Woudbe.

"Do you know—" and Madame looked earnestly in her face, lowering her voice— "that we shall lose certainly that suit."

"Heaven

“Heaven forbid!” cried Rosa, bursting into fresh tears.

“Perhaps if you knew certain people were going, for the last time, to visit their usurped possessions, you would not be in their *jute*, unfit as you are to travel.”

Rosa was all astonishment. The unprecedented ingratitude every body seemed disposed to act with towards the best of women, filled her with pain and indignation: she was so agitated, that she could not speak, and was obliged to have recourse to her sal volatile.

Madame continued—“If you would go with me to my villa, how happy I should be to assist in your recovery; and there is poor Aron Horsemagog actually dying with impatience, to tell you how you charmed him at the masquerade.

Rosa now thought less of Lady Gauntlet, and more of herself: her imagination had dwelt but too intensely on some of the hateful events of the masquerade; but those in which Lord Aron had a share, were too insignificant to retain a place in her memory.

“Be charm at the masquerade, Madame La Croix! oh, how you are mistaken!”

“No, upon my *honour*!” replied Madame, with an air that precluded all doubt of a fact so solemnly authenticated, “Lord Aron Horsemagog feels the strongest interest in your welfare—he has suffered inexpressibly during your disorder—he is very generous, and very honourable—and, in short, if Madame dared, she could offer a thousand arguments, why Miss Walsingham should prefer removing to her villa, just a short drive from town, which she might in every respect command as her own, to the being dragged three hundred miles in the suite of a woman! such a woman! a woman whom every body——”

“Whom every body must love and respect,” said Rosa, interrupting her with vivacity, “and whom every body will also feel for, if, as you say, she will lose her cause—dear, amiable Lady Gauntlet!—No, Madame, I thank you for all your consideration for me—I thank Lord Aron Horsemagog; but I can neither accept your kindness, of which I have so many proofs,

proofs, nor his, which I don't exactly understand: my health is very much impaired, but I already feel a grateful renovation; I shall at least be strong in spirits, if I am to witness so distressing a scene, as the depriving my patroness of what she considers as the birth-right of her children; I will console her who succoured me—heaven will give me powers—I shall be eloquent in such a cause. Alas! what of suffering can the human heart sustain which I have not endured? the heaviest of her afflictions—what, oh! what are they to mine! she will at least learn from me to *bear*."

Rosa seemed inspired;—all the blood left in her weak body mounted into her cheeks, tears streamed from her eyes, her figure was raised, and her hands clasped, as she added, "Oh, God! why must such a woman be reminded, whom thou lovest, thou chastenest!" when the door was thrown open, Lady Gauntlet entered, and she threw herself weeping on her neck.

"This poor girl," said her ladyship, in an accent of pity to Mrs. Woudbe, who followed, "is certainly a little wrong in her head at times. Ah, La Croix! are you there? but, pray, what is the matter? you look a little mad too!"

If guilt, fear, and astonishment could give the expression of madness to the countenance, Madame might certainly look so as to justify the exclamation of the countess.

Never was Madame so much out in her politics; judging by the first of criterions, her own feeling, she expected that a hint of the downfall of her patroness would be a direct damper of the enthusiastic regard Rosa expressed for Lady Gauntlet, and that, as nobody, not even Rosa, ever professed to love or respect Mrs. Woudbe, she would gladly accept the offered villa, and the protection of her best friend, Lord Aron, in preference to depending on a falling favourite, and an old amorous coquet; and certainly the Beggar would have preferred even her original state to the latter, had she been as well acquainted with her character as Madame La Croix; but her generous ardour baffled all Madame's schemes; and, what was worse, sent her home with such sort of intelligence, as,
if

if she had related it truly, must have entirely destroyed all Lord Aron Horsenmagog's hopes.

Madame answered Lady Gauntlet's half-earnest "Are you mad too?" with an accommodating smile;—and while Rosa bathed the hands of her patroness with the effusions of her full heart, ready to burst from her lips, she watched an opportunity to catch a glance, and put her finger on her lip, by way of enjoining secrecy; after which she retired with Mrs. Woudbe to receive her commands.

"What!" said Lady Gauntlet, following the Frenchwoman, with her eyes not quite so expressive of kindness as usual, "what has she been saying to you?"

Rosa's tears streamed afresh.

"You cannot, sure, be in her power?"

Rosa's countenance clearly said—no.

"Nor in the power of any of her friends?"

"Oh, no!"

Lady Gauntlet looked earnestly in the still intelligent, though pale face of our heroine. "Has she then been prating of me or my affairs?—yes, I see I am right;—she fancies my sun is setting—well, we shall see;—but what has she said?"

"That you, my honoured, my dear protectress, even *you*, are not happy."

"What! no more! and is it for such a trifle as that you wept in such agony?"

"A trifle! Ah, madam, can what afflicts *you* be a trifle to *me*! can you think me so ungrateful?"

"You are at least an uncommon character. But are you sure my happiness was the sole subject of Madame La Croix's conversation?"

"Except some nonsense about Lord Aron Horsenmagog."

"Ah! I thought madame had her motives. Well—and so poor Lord Aron is dying for you?"

"So madame foolishly insinuated; but I did not quite so foolishly credit it."

"No, you have too much good sense—La Croix is very well in her way; but—"

Very well! did Rosa recollect right—had not the countess said she was the best creature in the world.

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The countess called one of her sweetest expressions in her lovely face. "In the world, my dear Walsingham, where you are an infant, nay, where you are not yet in existence—but we are at this moment retired from that busy, dangerous, delightful world—where I have never met any thing like you, and I know you will be frightened to hear it has already given you the credit of an intrigue with this Lord Aron. I need not the evidence of that indignant glow—I know you are injured in essentials;—but pray, were you at his villa with him?"

"His villa! with him! I was carried to Madame's villa, in her coach; she is in habits of leaving town every week for air and exercise."

"Vastly well! and you accepted a dress from his Lordship for the masquerade night?"

"Accept a dress! no, I bought my dress. Madame, always obliging to me, in respect to your ladyship, pressed me to accept it from her; but obligations are painful to me, particularly pecuniary ones;—besides, Mrs. Woudbe insisted on my taking a whole year's salary, and I was too rich to need a present, and too proud to accept it."

Lady Gauntlet's winning smiles, her dimples, and the laughing expression of her charming eyes, were no more. "Miss Walsingham," said her ladyship, "you are a good, a charming young woman; your sentiments, like your person, as as free from blemish as human nature can be; retain that frank, that just and noble pride; retain it, by the only means by which it is to be retained, by preserving that guileless innocence to which I, who have moved in the first society, and who must now continue to move in it or die, look up. The world is a school of bitter experience; I am astonished how you can have been an inmate in this house, and in Madame La Croix's, without being a little initiated into its principles; you have uncommon obligations to the precept, and example of those with whom you have lived; for yet, as I before said, you are scarce born—yes, even though that ingenuous look taxes me with the sorrows you have known, in contradiction of my thesis;—but what real sorrow can rive
that

that heart which has not offended against its own purity? Ah, my good girl! if you know—but I hope (and her countenance resumed its usual sweetness of character) you will never know—”

Rosa, whose real affection for this accomplished Circe, gave a partial interpretation to all she said, was lost in grateful admiration of the lesson, and her, who thus stooping from her high rank, condescended to instruct “a Beggar.”

“And now,” continued her ladyship, “I have done sermonizing, a thing rather novel to me and my sort, I will give you a history:—There was a certain rich lord, whose first passion for beauty became, by unbounded gratification, so degenerate, that, as he advanced in life, it passed from one horrid extreme to another; till, satiated with the deformities, as well as charms, of the common field of prostitution, and having injured his constitution by the excesses in which he indulged, he reformed his conduct, so far as to have wretches in pay, in different parts of the metropolis, to hunt out objects unhackneyed in his favourite pursuit. For the reception of these victims he furnished a small villa, within a few miles of London, whither they were usually carried, and where, his appetite for novelty encreasing by being fed, they were seldom invited to make a second visit:—having, in one of his perambulations round town, seen a beautiful girl get out of a country stage into a hackney coach, he followed, and watched her to the house of an accommodating tradeswoman, who differed so much from his other agents, that, young and beautiful herself, as well as having an elegant house at the service of those customers who could pay well for such conveniences, her price was proportioned to her person and appearance.—I see, by your countenance, you begin to comprehend me; so it is not necessary to add, like the country sign, ‘this is a red lion:’—but it is a lesson of experience I give you, at the expence of my own penetration; for had Madame La Croix been better known to me, I should not have thought her the “best creature in the world.”—The finale of the history is, that the young lady was carried to the villa of the noble lord,

lord, instead of that of her female friend; but such was the respect inspired by the purity of her heart, and delicacy of her manners, that he dared not to drop the mask; and such were the impressions she made, that he gave his agent commission to offer any terms to get the name of the fair novelty added to the list of victims: This, however, did not happen, but the next desirable thing to real possession, did; for he had the reputation of it, which he had too much vanity to disclaim, more especially as he had yet hope of turning fiction to reality; a hope not absolutely unreasonable, as, he was persuaded, she accepted from him, and appeared in public, in a muslin dress, trimmed with fine lace, which had been exhibited at his agent's house, as made by his lordship's order, to present to a new favourite.—”

Rosa's astonishment was so great and unfeigned, at the conclusion of Lady Gauntlet's history, that it required all her confidence in the veracity, as well as judgment of her patroness, to render the incidents possible; but a sudden ray of light darted on her soul at the conclusion: If indeed, such wickedness were known to exist in broad day; if such an insignificant as her humble self, had really excited the attention, or curiosity of that world her patroness was so well acquainted with, but which it was impossible she should comprehend; if a report so injurious to her had been received; if it was favoured by Lord Aron Horse-magog,—and if believed by Montreville,—was it not at once his defence and apology?

A load was at once taken from her heart; and her eyes, from whence the animated brilliancy, which were their peculiar expression, had been totally expelled, by downcast melancholy, or floods of sorrow, shone with delight.

“How is this?” said her penetrating ladyship; “can an injury done your character please? can it, indeed, fail to distress you?”

“It has been the fate of my life, Madam,” answered Rosa with firmness, “always to suffer by malice of others, which I never provoked, and by innocent, not wilful, error of my own; yet, though often,

as

as in the present instance, the calumny has itself afforded a justification, I must feel injuries, which, even to those who do not know my person, stamps depravity on my mind, and robs me of the dearest attribute of my sex; but, dear madam, *you* know me innocent, and Mrs. Woudbe must do justice to the inoffensiveness of my life: I am the creature of your goodness; I am her dependent; I have no hope beyond your protection,—no ambition beyond the station I fill; perhaps I might be more happy, if honoured with the same situation, with a lady of more cultivated mind; but I am not less grateful to Mrs. Woudbe, because she is less happy than Lady Gauntlet, and some other ladies I have had the honour to know—I am sorry, not distressed, that the world mistakes my character; but there is a person in that strange world, whose good opinion was dear to me, who was in full possession of mine, and whose changed sentiments was marked by so great a change of manners, that it transformed the perfect fine gentleman, into the rude insulter of an unprotected woman; he spoke daggers, and my heart was broken;—I regretted his lost confidence, and I more deeply regretted he had deprived himself of mine; but I saw him conversing with this lord; if he believed me guilty, he is justified; he has not wantonly insulted me; no, it was the anguish of his own feelings which outraged mine.”

“Bravo,” cried Lady Gauntlet; “but, my ingenious little friend, who is this divine fellow, to whom, in the history of yourself, you forgot to give a name?”

“My reserve, believe me, madam,” replied Rosa, “was neither the effect of art, nor want of confidence:—I had first indulged, and then torn myself from an attachment, I knew must be the source of misery to myself, and of humiliation to a dearer object;—yes, what I have suffered proves him too, too dear, —and I had imposed eternal silence on myself, in respect to him, and all his connections; but the joy of exculpating him from the crimes which tortured me, opens my heart to the most amiable and respected of friends; yes, madam, at the moment I tell you, I never will see him more, I may confess my fatal weakness

ness to you;—I may tell you of him, whose honour is dear to me as my life,—though he may give the name of Montreville to another.”

Lady Gauntlet half screamed;—she started off her chair; the surprise put her off all guard:—“Montreville!” she exclaimed; “Montreville! what Montreville do you mean?”

Rosa knew not the family name of her amiable friend was Montreville; and the last thing she would have suspected was, that the man of her choice was precisely him whom she hoped would be proved an impostor; in short, the very being whose claims, if maintainable, would deprive her patroness of her honours and estate; she simply answered, “The grandson of Admiral Herbert, of the Grange, in Yorkshire.”

Lady Gauntlet’s first alarm was, least the delectable Major, her own son,

“Whose air cries arm!—whose every look’s an oath,”

without having ever seen warmer service than that of inland marches, and mounting guard at St. James’s, was the Adonis, about whose honour the Beggar was so anxious. She was no sooner at ease, in this important point, than she actually burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; which, as it made light of so serious a subject, visibly embarrassed our heroine.

“And so,” cried the countess, at length having composed her muscles into her usual gentle smile, “Montreville is the phoenix of your idolatry; and his honour is dearer to you than your life;—oh, upon my word, after that, you will be spared the declaration you have lately been fond of making, ‘that life is of no value;’—do not throw such anxious incredulity into your pretty face; you will find the thing exactly as I say, and when we get into the country, I shall, perhaps, cure you of your passion; but pray do you know his Portuguese mother?”

Rosa knew not she was a Portuguese, nor that she existed, till she learned it from the rejoicings at Pontefract.

“Oh, no doubt the fatted calf was killed,” her ladyship said, scornfully; but she advised Rosa by no means

means to make Mrs. Woudbe a confidante of her passion; for, and again she laughed out, she might tell her natural brother; “and yes,” she added, “you may be surprised, but take it on my word, my dear little friend, that may inconvenience your honourable idol.”

“I have no idol, madam,” said Rosa, hurt at a certain satirical glance, that all Lady Gauntlet’s sweetness did not effectually conceal; “I have confessed my weakness to you, and—” a tear stole down her cheek.

“And,—” said her ladyship, kissing the pearly drop off, “you really shall not have cause to regret it;—I think I love you at this moment, though you are so beautiful, and that is more than I ever promised; and I give you a paradox to study, as a reason, why the greatest vexation of my life, and the greatest disappointment of yours, proceed from one and the same object; and what will further amaze you, I am very much deceived if our good friend Mrs. Woudbe does not suffer still more than either of us by the same famous being;—’tis really droll that three women, whose fates have such very different aspects, should be united in one mystery, and suffering under the same planet; but time, child, time will develop every thing:—call on me, the first leisure morning at Delworth, for the clue of this maze, and, in the mean time, whatever you hear of my law-suit, do not, by fretting, retard the return of your beauty: I am a disciple of Lavater, and see that dignity of brow, which I at first thought native, prognosticates *acquired*, not *born*, greatness;—yes, I see the downfall of one beauty, and the elevation of another in that little corner of your eye;—but where, or when, did you see the seducing Montreville last?”

“At the masquerade,” answered the blushing Rosa, confused, she knew not why, at the raillery of the countess.

“At the masquerade! well, I know he was there, but thought him fully engaged; pray was it then he offered the insult you are so ready to excuse, and so good as to forgive?”

Again Rosa blushed, and scarce whispered “yes.”

“At

“ At what hour ? ”

“ After Mrs. Woudbe unmasked.”

“ Great ! ” cried her ladyship ; “ this Montreville, I am curious to know him ; he has talents for a statesman ! quite a man of business !—Well, my dear, Mrs. Woudbe has, I dare say, by this time, dismissed La Croix, and I have a thousand things myself to arrange ; so, after passing so long with you, without saying a syllable on the subject, which brought me here, I have but a moment to tell you, I have ordered you some white farfenet, some lace, feathers, and muslin, which I desire you will, as I know you are very clever, make by some of Mrs. Woudbe’s fine things ; and now I read your advancement in your looks, I shall send you some more ; you will, besides having air and exercise, see some company at Delworth, and it will gratify *me*, though not them, to see you admired ; and, who knows whether some odd destiny or other may not carry the Portuguese and her phoenix thither. —Adieu ;—come, don’t devour my hand ; you will not always be so fond of kissing it.”

“ Then I shall not be fond of any thing ; then I shall no longer feel, no longer think, no longer exist.”

“ *Well, we shall see ;* in the mean time be well, and recollect, you have a journey of three hundred miles to take, which commences in two days.”

C H A P. IV.

“ The good must merit God’s peculiar care ;

“ But who, but God, can tell us who they are ? ”

AS no lady of moderate understanding, could be a greater admirer of fashionable manners, or more desirous to emulate them, than Mrs. Woudbe, Lady Gauntlet’s rather profuse presents to Rosa, in consequence of her skill in physiognomy, was followed by many from her. Mrs. Woudbe was guilty of a thousand daily meannesses, in the midst of her profusion ;

but if it was an attribute of nobility to be generous, she would be so in spite of nature; and Rosa's pride not revolting against acts of generosity, so becoming in her patroness to offer, and proper for her to accept, her wardrobe, both useful and ornamental, was of course replenished; and Mrs. Woudbe took especial care to inform her, that, though not just now on a level with the countess, in point of rank, she was infinitely superior to her in riches; which, indeed, was too true; for, it is a melancholy fact, in these hard and perilous times, that the nobility of the kingdom are the poorest people in it; and how, indeed, can it fail to be so? how can a nobleman of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty thousand pounds a-year, keep even with his tradesmen, when there are so many elegant, unnecessary expences, which take up all the ready money; and when he has in his establishment, men who, like the worthy progenitor of Mr. Woudbe, have an eye to driving their own set of bright bays.

Earl Gauntlet had some eighteen or twenty thousand pounds a-year, a place at court, a *sinécure* on the revenue, and a commission in the army; his elder hope was a member of parliament, in the interest of the minister, and had, besides, a place of no inconsiderable profit in one of the home departments; his second son was a young officer, of old rank, in the guards; and his countess had,—no human being, save her beautiful self, can estimate her income; all little folks knew of the matter was, that it must be very great, and that she was both able and willing to spend it; so that Earl Gauntlet was really a distressed man.

Rosa, however, was rich; so rich, that having paid the trifle Mrs. La Croix took for her fine dress, out of the remains of her own money, she had now no occasion to change the fifty pounds Mrs. Woudbe advanced; but the case of her circumstances, in regard to pecuniary matters, had not the magical effect on Rosa's mind, which some people fancy is the concomitant of a full purse.

What would not Rosa now have given to hear of Mr. Frowe, and how severely did she regret the position regard to appearance which prevented her from
giving

giving him her address, or receiving his; and after eight months, in which he had made no enquiry after her, it was not now to be expected.

The duty she owed to the children of Major Buhanun, urged her to write to Dr. Cameron, to inform him of John's knowledge of the affairs of their deceased relation; and she was also often tempted to write to that gentleman on her own account; but, after all, what possible benefit could result to the major's children, or what pleasure to himself, from such vague information as she could give them; she understood so little of the public funds, that she had never recollected even the names mentioned by John; so that except he had written, as she sometimes hoped, on failing to find her, or gone himself to Scotland and made them acquainted with the good fortune himself, all she could say on the subject would but raise expectation, without power to realize it; still, therefore, in hope that some happy chance might again restore the faithful humble friend she had so unfortunately missed, she resolved to defer writing to Scotland; but there was a duty which, though less impelled to by inclination, she could not answer to herself to neglect.

It was now near nine months since she parted with her mother; Mr. Garnet had given her his address, and though the affluence of his circumstances as well as the affection he evinced for his wife, were sufficient sureties for her worldly comforts, yet it was incumbent on her to inform herself of the health and happiness of her only parent, before she commenced a journey, which, besides possible accidents to herself, might, considering her mother's time of life, infirmities, and unfortunate propensity, render a future meeting uncertain: under the influence of these reflections having, with the assistance of the servant, arranged and packed her clothes in a travelling trunk belonging to Mrs. Woudbe's carriage, the day before that fixed for their departure, and obtained Mrs. Woudbe's permission to be absent a few hours, she sent for a hack, and after passing through what appeared to her a new world, in comparison with the regions of St. James's, and Portman-square, the coach stopped, according to her direction, at a very

pretty house, in Paradise-street, Rotherhithe, with the name of Garnet, on a brass plate on the door.

Rosa felt an emotion of pleasure very naturally accounted for,—the habitation of the mother was no disgrace to the child;—this was an observation, on which her mind might rest, without the censure of local pride; it was comfortable to her parent, and that rendered it so to herself.

A decent woman opened the door, and, with an expression of pleasure in her plain countenance, invited Rosa in, and, without asking a single question, or answering one put to her, shewed her into a neat parlour, where, as Mr. Garnet said, she might see herself in the furniture and painted floor-cloth, and where, the busy servant, having placed her a chair, her question, if Mr. or Mrs. Garnet were at home? was answered by another,—if she was the pretty young lady as was so good to mistus when her leg was broked? because if she was, master and mistus lest order, she should have the whole house, as good a one it wur as any in Paradise-street, and the garden as nice as hands could make it, all as if it wur her own, and live in it till they comed back again.

Rosa was affected at the declared kindness, which provided her with so comfortable an asylum, and felt a latent self reproach for her want of affection for so considerate a mother, which kept her a moment silent, before she could enquire, if they had been in town since Mrs. Garnet's accident?

“Oh, bless your soul! Miss,” answered the woman, “that they have, and mistus picked up purely; and, to be sure, there was fitch a fuss about making rice puddings every Sunday, ay, and often a worky-days too, and all eppesing of you;—then mastur said, he thoht as someat ad appened to you, and mistus cried and took on; but I thoht as she groed pure and stout again; but howiver I was out, for she groed sick, poor sole, and mallowholly, and fell off on her meals; and mastur and she went to some doctor's out of town, and after that, why she wait a morsel better, and then off they set agen to the same doctor's; for my share I would not give a pidd for country doctors; and then
summer

summer comed, and our gardin comed out purely ; 'tis a monstrous pretty gardin Miss,—here, you may see it out of this winder,—I am up yearly and late at it myself ; only had two days work done by a gardener, all the summur ;—howfiver mistus pined to a skillet ; so mastur said as he would go once more to that country doctor, a poor chip-in-porridge thing, I dare for to say ; howfiver go they did ; and then mastur said, as he would take mistress a jaunting into the country to divert her, for, poor sole, she looked like a ghost ; and then, Miss, there comed a fine gentleman, as mistus said was your sweet-heart, and axed all about you."

" About me !"

" As sure as you are alive, Miss."

" When was this ?"

" Oh Lord ! many's the time and oft ; and then he sent letters, some on em cost a matter of sevenpence, but mastur said as he was welcome as flowers in May ; I do believe here is one on em a top on the glass."

The woman having reached the letter ; if Rosa's declining to read it was not a triumph of temper, it was a triumph of equal merit ; for the hand and seal were unquestionably Montreville's, and her pride, if not her love, was gratified, at finding he had sacrificed his dislike of the Garnets, to the desire of finding her.

The possibility, that by this channel, she might on some future time, have it in her power to clear the imputations, which a combination of chance and wickedness had cast on her character, and overwhelm him with regret for his credulity, gave a glow of pleasure to her countenance, as she rejected the offered letter, and rising asked if she could have Mr. Garnet's address.

" Nothen," the woman said, " could be more out of luck, for thof only yesterday she had a letter from mistus, concerning bottlen the ale, Mr. Tod, the Meerykan marchant, wanted to write to mastur, from his country ouse, atop of Blackheath, and not knowing better, she giv it to him ; but in two or three days it might be had agen."

Rosa the more seriously regretted this circumstance, as her leaving town would preclude a possibility of receiving it there, and she was as totally ignorant of the

route Lady Gauntlet intended to take, as where her feat lay ; all she had heard was, that it was in the north ; —she therefore desired to be kindly remembered to Mr. and Mrs. Garnet, and then recollecting the child, asked if he accompanied them ?

“ Oh, bless your sole, Miiss ! no, —mastur said, as he wud be ruinated, so left him at boarding school hard-by ”

Rosa took the address of the school ; and though the woman earnestly begged her to consider how mastur and mistus wud fret, because she wud not make the best house in Paradise-street, and the nicest garden in the world her own, an offer that would not come every sunshiny day, and concluded her remonstrance, shrewdly nodding, with “ folks might go fuder and fare wus,” she ordered the hack to the boarding-school, and being instantly recognized by little Phill, discharged part of her debt of gratitude for the affectionate kindness of the father, by caresses and presents to the child ; after which she returned to Portman-square, better both in look and spirits, and certainly not less happy, for her short excursion.

Mrs. Woudbe, in high good humour, rallied her on her Rotherhithe acquaintance ; supposed they were Cyclops, and that, from their residence at such an out-of-the-way place, their heads came in contact with the feet of christians at the west end of the town.

Mr. Woudbe, not quite so full of wit and jest, said many a man who could buy half the west end of the town, lived about Rotherhithe.

Rosa smiled ; —some humble friends dropped in ; Mrs. Woudbe, who, with all her predilection for high rank, was little less delighted to be the queen of the company where she might top the great personage, had no small number of humble friends ; and those who now came to take their leave of her, had so happy a knack at laughing, in the proper periods of her conversation, admiring all she said, and praising all she did, that Rosa, finding she might steal off unobserved, retired, if not to rest, to dwell on subjects as exhilarating, —and was up in the morning, ready dressed for the journey, in a pretty habit made by Lady Gauntlet’s

let's tradesman exactly like her own, with the Windsor uniform, three hours before Mrs. Woudbe was stirring, who, indeed, was not half dressed when the Earl's coach stopped at the door.

The countess did not alight, but the earl always and on every occasion a complete courtier, got out to unglove to Mr. Woudbe, and hand Mrs. Woudbe into the carriage.

The Montrevilles were remarkable for a certain character of countenance, which assimilated in all the family portraits, and were equally striking in the living branches of the family; the picture, which so struck Rosa in Lady Gauntlet's room, of the late earl, might almost have passed for the present earl, or his brother, though the latter was much inferior to the former in personal advantages; but still the resemblance was striking, and Rosa, who had never seen him before, viewed him with such rivetted attention, that she forgot, till reminded by Mr. Woudbe, that he waited with uncovered head, extended hand, and body inclining to the bend, to offer the same service to her. Too much confused to apologize, she hastily entered the carriage; and, blushing no less at her absence of thought, than at the secret motive which occasioned it, shrunk, with averted eyes, into the corner of the coach.

Lady Gauntlet, ever attentive to etiquette, bowed very graciously, and announced Miss Walsingham to her lord;—his lordship lost nothing by the concealment, under the fringed curtains of Rosa's fine downcast eyes: Ladies' eyes, except royal ones, were no part of his lordship's admiration, still less of his study; he bowed in a most civil manner, and the carriage dash'd off.

The journey began and ended, as most long journeys do; after a few brilliant sallies from Mrs. Woudbe, and as many sweet smiles from the countess, the former became dull, the latter thoughtful; Lord Gauntlet fell asleep, and Rosa had her book; this lasted till the first change of horses at Barnet; when the dusty road, and the heat of the weather, furnished conversation for the next half dozen miles, when the air had so good an effect, that the dinner formed a fresh topic of general interest.

At St. Alban's they overtook the younger branches of the family, to whom Lady Gauntlet introduced Mrs. Woudbe and her young companion.

Lady Louisa, the earl's eldest daughter, had, as was mentioned in the first volume, made an early and imprudent marriage with a gentleman, who, however charmed with her beauty, certainly did carry her young ladyship off to Scotland in pursuit of the nearest road to church preferment, for Mr. Brudenel was an ordained, unbeneficed clergyman.

Lady Gauntlet, who was very partial to this daughter, forgave an offence she was wise enough to acknowledge, proceeded from a mistake of her own; for relying on the power of that beauty which she had proved in herself so irresistible, she presented her daughter at court, with the serious intention of marrying her to the richest Duke in England before she was fifteen.

Marriage was not, however, in that Duke's way; and though Lady Louisa was seen every where, admired, toasted, and talked of, Mr. Brudenel happened to be the first man who said any very soft things to her, and with such effect, he easily persuaded her to accompany him to Gretna Green.

His expectations were not entirely disappointed. Lady Gauntlet could command those who commanded every thing but money; Mr. Brudenel was therefore inducted into two very valuable livings: but as he was obliged to begin life on credit, and, of course, pay twice over for what he did *not*, as well as what he really did want, the Rev. Mr. Brudenel, and his wife Lady Louisa were very shabby appendages to the family of the lovely Countess, their honoured mother; and they afforded at the same time a very interesting study for the younger daughters, and a hint to herself for her own future conduct towards them.

When the education of the ladies was complete, that is to say, when a Swiss governess, perfectly adequate to the task of instruction, had done with them, Lady Gauntlet, conscious perhaps, that too close an intimacy with her daughters might not exactly correspond with her wish to preserve their minds untainted by, and even in ignorance of, the innocent transactions
of

of her own busy life, engaged Madame Rosette, a cidevant baroness of high birth, unimpeached character, and admired accomplishments, partly as companion, and partly as governess to her grown daughters.

Madame Rosette's family, were among the first who deserted their post at Versailles, at the beginning of the disturbance there, when emigration was rather the run of fashion than an act of necessity, and when the flying nobles expected to return in triumph; and so ill provided was the Baron Rosette for the events which followed, and for ever deprived him of his honour and fortune, that Madame was very soon in a situation to be thankful to the foundress of St. Cyr for an education that gave her bread, while her husband died of a broken heart among the dejected heroes in the army of Condé.

Madame Rosette was as virtuous as she was noble and accomplished; but the happiness she might have experienced in a family where she was treated with infinite respect, in the society of amiable young women who loved her, was embittered by open repinings after the rank and fortune she had lost,—and every other sentiment jaundiced by an inveterate hatred of plebeians—a feeling, perhaps, not unnatural in a heart bleeding from every vein over the excesses committed by monsters who were once the object of her contempt; and she was not more tenacious of the honour and virtue of the young ladies under her care, than of that innate superiority of rank which she insisted could only be preserved by keeping inferiors at an awful distance—a lesson to which, not only the miseries Madame Rosette deplored, but the discontented poverty of their own sister, pining incessantly for the splendor she had lost, gave both weight and authority.

Mrs. Woudbe's face, Madame declared, reminded her of the poissardes who made up the dreadful cavalcade from Paris to Versailles, which drove her from France; there was not a trait in her countenance which was not eminently vulgar, and her demeanour was so perfectly bourgeoise, that it was with infinite pain she bore to sit in her company. Could, then, the humble companion of a woman, so obnoxious and contempti-

ble, be honoured with the notice of Madame Rosette or her fair pupils? No—the thing was impossible;—and though the young ladies immediately discovered an interesting candour in Rosa's countenance—and though Madame acknowledged, that, if her situation and connections did not prove the direct contrary, she would, from the air of gentility in every feature of her fine face, and every movement of her graceful person, have been ready to give her credit for as good blood as flowed in the veins of her pupils, or even her own; yet the bar between their rank and hers was insurmountable, and her respectful compliments were returned with civilities no less cold than formal.

Rosa had been too long inured to the supercilious notice of little minds to be mortified at slights, evidently levelled at her circumstances; but she could not help feeling the hardship of being in the same party, going to the same place, and living under the same roof with young women of her own age, in whose open looks she read candour and good-humour, without hope of being admitted to their little parties; and she sat down by Mrs. Woudbe, visibly disconcerted. The major, or, as he was called by his mother, Lord Charles, was cursed hungry; but he must, nevertheless, see how his dogs fared before he would eat himself;—but Lord Delworth instantly recollected the incident at Mushroom-Place, and the face, which was indeed formed to make a lasting impression where it was once seen with interest. Nothing was less likely to be remembered by the Earl than a fine set of features; the major was at that time too much in wine to remember any thing; the young ladies had merely followed their mother into the eating-parlour; and as nothing could, in their opinion, be more disagreeably insipid than the two pretty daughters of Sir Solomon Mushroom, they had confined their attention to a small talk between themselves, without having their curiosity excited by the distress of the Countess of Lowder, and still less, by the insignificant being who was the innocent cause of it; so it was only by Lord Delworth Rosa was recognised.

This

This young man, whose natural respect for his mother was not certainly the less for observing the adroitness and success with which she managed the interest of her family, and preserved that superiority of beauty and attraction above all her compeers, which was the best earnest of her continued power, did not think it proper to dis-arrange any plan she might have formed by the discovery he had made; and if the fine creature had come into the family by accident, opportunities enough would occur at Delworth for improving recollection into intimacy.

Lord Delworth was a young man, famous for no active virtues, nor accused of any very uncommon vices: it could not happen that a law suit, in which he was so immediately interested, and which was of such importance to his family, could be a secret to him; but such was his experience of the management of his mother, and such his confidence in the ease and cheerfulness of her demeanour, that he did not burthen the happy equanimity of his temper with anticipation of apprehending evil, when he was so near the possession of certain good: for, was he not to be married to a fine girl with eighty thousand pounds! was he not to touch near half of that sum himself! and if the heart of his bride was set on a coronet she would never wear, if her settlements were making on an estate she would not enjoy, would her disappointments unmarry her? or recall that part of her fortune which he had destined to be scattered half over London? Certainly not.

Before the author concludes this digression, she begs leave to hint to those ignorant people, who are of opinion that, at least in the momentous affairs of his estate and family, Lord Gauntlet's name should sometimes be mentioned;—such a husband as his lordship is on no occasion otherwise necessary to the arrangement of such wives as her ladyship, than to stand forth her champion in any dirty business in which her character or interest may be involved; in which case, he will be handed down to posterity, with all the distinction he deserves.

The

The first repast being ended, the family and *suite*, consisting of the Earl and Countess, with Mrs. Woudbe and Rosa, in the post-coach—the young ladies, Madame Rosette, and a female domestic in the landau—the Countess and Mrs. Woudbe's woman, with Lord Gauntlet's valet, in Mrs. Woudbe's chaise—Lord Delworth and the major in the former's chaise—their two valets and the major's dogs in Lord Gauntlet's chaise—two other female servants and a man-cook in a hack-chaise—and a suitable number of out-riders—proceeded on their journey; and as the Countess never lost a moment of time, got into the inn, where they slept, so late, that, after a very slight repast, every body were glad to retire,

And thus, with very little variation, except what fine roads and beautiful prospects afforded, the long journey was accomplished; which gave Rosa leisure to compare her first excursion to the north in a humble hack-chaise, with a man of honour, sense, and urbanity, without a single attendant, or the cavalcade which, though it attracts all the eyes, bows, courtesies, tumbling beggars, and barking curs of every village from London to Cumberland, left on her mind a decided preference of comfort to show.

The first glance of Delworth House, however, compensated for the insipidity of the companions of her journey; for, impossible as it may seem, even the Countess either was or affected to sleep half the way.

It was evening when they passed the porter's lodge. The rays of the departing sun set in a fine clouded sky over lustre-brown turrets, which rose in majestic grandeur on the brow of an eminence, at the foot of another eminence considerably higher, clothed with trees, whose waving foliage exhibited the countless shades of that universal tint with which nature decks her favourite scenes.

The road, which was circular, led by separate ascents through fine plantations of noble trees to a flat in front of the magnificent building; in the centre of which was a large sheet of water; on its clear bosom a highly-ornamented vessel, with streamers waving in the wind, rode at anchor, from which a band of such
rural

rural music as the neighbouring village afforded, with two French-horns and a flute from among the earl's domestics, greeted the arrival of their lord; the revivibrating strains of the music, simple as they were; the extensive view on all sides many miles over the adjacent, luxuriant, well-cultivated country; the profusion of fine flowers, and flowering shrubs, in high scent and in bloom; the Gothic splendor of the fine house they were approaching, which, though it spoke the taste of other days, was in the highest order and neatness, struck Rosa with such enthusiastic admiration, that she exclaimed, seizing the hand of the Countess, and pressing it fervently to her lips, "This is surely a repose for the happy favourites of heaven!"

The Earl gave the first symptom of feeling he had betrayed for five long days, in a deep sigh, and Lady Gauntlet looked grave; but Mrs. Woudbe protested, if Mr. Woudbe could move the Dorsetshire house to such a spot as that before her, she really believed she could live in it three months at a time!

The Earl again sighed as the carriage stopped. The domestics lined the spacious hall, through which Lady Gauntlet led the way into a drawing-room, with Gothic bow windows, from which it appeared as impossible to limit, as to satiate the eye,—such was the enchanting beauty of the view it commanded.

"Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Woudbe, "what a grand old building stands on the level of that fine park! I declare it would make a charming frontispiece for the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of St. Bog-and-moat."

"And the scenery!" said Rosa, with vivacity—"what infinitely finer sights might fancy take from what you now see, Madam, than any you could glean from rambling round your seat in Dorsetshire; and how much more venerable and solemn are the woods near this charming place than those you were so attached to there."

"As to that, Miss Walsingham," answered Mrs. Woudbe, "I have altered my plan since I studied the horrors of my husband's woods in Dorsetshire; and if I had not made up my mind to description of beauties
and

and horrors, which eye never saw, nor ears ever heard, merely because none of those horrid low creatures who write for bread shall presume to say I copy them, I must own that this place exceeds any thing I ever saw; and if a good thunder-storm would but flash through the trees, and tear up a few of them by the root; and if, as I said before, I was not resolved never to set my name to any thing natural—Pray, Lady Gauntlet, is that the sea yonder which I took for a white cloud?”

“An arm of it,” replied the Countess, “which washes the base of the rocks you see beyond the castle.”

Coffee, tea, ices, lemonade, and fruits, were served; after which the Earl retired to his library, his elder son to the stables, the younger to the kennel, and the ladies to their apartment with Madame Rosette.

“Well, Lady Gauntlet,” cried Mrs. Woudbe, looking through her eye-glass out of the window, “this is really an heavenly place.”

“I give *you* joy of heaven then,” answered the lady, with an expression of countenance Rosa could not understand.

“Thank ye, dear Countess,” said Mrs. Woudbe, half courtesying, with the same mysterious expression. “But pray tell me what fine old castle that is?”

“Denningcourt—Lord Denningcourt’s present residence. The elegant, expensive, still handsome Lord Denningcourt, they say, resides in a corner of that old building, bare as it was left by the late lord of even necessities.

“As great a brute as his son,” interrupted Mrs. Woudbe—“I hated the one, and despise the other.”

“He certainly always had an odd habit of overlooking;—but (and the Countess smiled at Rosa) you see how he is punished. That fine seat, which overlooks him, on the rise at the further extremity of the park, is the jointure-house, new built from the foundation, furnished, and ornamented at an immense expence by the angry papa of the present earl for his widow; and the best of the business is, she is, after all, but tenant for life; for the jointure-house must

go to the next dowager, whoever she may be, and the whole of the estate is bound to the repairs of the deserted castle. See how, like a proud minion, yon new house seems to soar above the deserted favourite. All that was worth removing, the actual heir looms excepted, have been carried to the jointure-house, where, at her husband's last request, the dowager principally

"Well," answered Mrs. Woudbe, "it must be vastly pleasant to have such fashionable neighbours—you visit, to be sure?"

"No—we do not. Lady Denningcourt——"

"Is the strangest woman in the world, and the rudest too."

"I am not to be told that."

"So I can't wonder your ladyship does not let her in. I assure you I shall exactly follow—that is, I never design to visit her. Only think how insolent she treated me after I sent the tickets to her niece—a vulgar thing! with her Scotch brogue—never opened her doors to me; but if ever I give another masquerade——"

"You will manage better," said the Countess, with a dimpled smile.

"And pray what town is that beyond?" asked Mrs. Woudbe.

"'Tis only a village—Denningcourt. The buildings you see, which gives it so important an appearance, are an alms-house for poor women, an hospital for the village invalids, a charity school, and an infant nursery."

"And pray, my dear madam," cried Rosa, with energy, "who was so good as to think of all those things?"

"One whom, though I do not love, I respect, Miss Walsingham,—it is the Countess of Denningcourt."

"Ah, madam! did she not well merit that her own dome should rise superior to the old castle?"

"She is, I tell you," said Mrs. Woudbe, "the most ridiculous creature in the world. Very handsome, no doubt; but so quizzish and proud! and so stately!"

"She

"She was," the countess coolly said, "daughter and sister to a duke."

This floored Mrs. Woudbe about Lady Denningcourt; for who respected dukes and duke's relations more than her.

"And pray what place is that," she asked, "on the left?"

That, Lady Gauntlet coldly said, was Delworth: Lord Gauntlet and herself were little in the country; their duty and inclination detained them elsewhere; where, if they did not build charity-houses, she hoped they were at their post.

As there were no other very near neighbours fashionable enough to interest Mrs. Woudbe, and as the several villages in sight, from the eminence on which they stood, were merely clusters of houses with a steeple, Mrs. Woudbe had already seen enough of the charming prospect, when the supper-bell rung. The meal was elegant, and well served; Lady Gauntlet all herself; Mrs. Woudbe, who was much devoted to the gratifications of the table, paid it due respect; Lord Gauntlet was thoughtful; Lord Delworth chatty; the major, or Lord Charles, noisy; the young ladies reserved; Madame Rosetta silent; and Rosa, as she was still blessed with the particular notice of her patroness, pleased with every thing.

The next day, that most delightful visitor which can be received at a country seat, the post, arrived: it brought letters for every part of the family, Mrs. Woudbe and her humble companion excepted. "Blessed are they who expect nothing:" By that rule Rosa was much the happier of the two, for she could not be disappointed; now Mrs. Woudbe was, and retired, in very ill humour, to write to her natural brother.

Delworth House abounded in all sorts of magnificence: the beds were down; the carpets portrayed all the beauty of colour; the furniture was grand; the mirrors such, and so judiciously disposed, as to reflect every beauty of situation as well as person; the sideboards were richly and tastefully decorated; the table served with a profusion of delicacies, and the servants numerous and attentive; no form was observed, but every

every body left to the amusements of their own fancy; books, music, and instruments; tables stored with implements for drawing; saddle horses and carriages, were at their command; in short, there was nothing to wish for, but that placid content in the host, which is the most flattering earnest of welcome to the guest—and this there was not.

If, instead of leaving his affairs to a steward and signing his accounts without examining a single voucher, Lord Gauntlet had paid as much attention to pounds, shillings, and pence, as his friend Sir Solomon Mushroom, he could not have been more constantly fixed to the secretary in his library.

The countess was also just now vastly taken up: she had not only to display her fine taste in the ornamental preparations for her son's wedding, but almost daily expresses to read and to answer—for Lady Gauntlet's correspondence was too sacred to be carried on in the common way.

Mrs. Woudbe was miserable, for the wicked natural brother was still a defaulter in letter writing;—her husband, indeed, was tolerably attentive, and her daughter sometimes wrote to her; but so inadequate were those proofs of attention from them to sooth the raging tempest in her bosom, that all Rosa's efforts to amuse or console her were to no effect; vainly she reminded her of her resolution to go on with the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of St. Bog-and-moat: Mrs. Woudbe's occupation, as far as respected writing, was over, or rather not begun; although if her own feelings had been at that moment committed to paper, her reality would have outdone the best horror-monger of the age.

Lord Delworth, notwithstanding his approaching nuptials, chose to level a few sighs and tender glances at Rosa: the major too, having nothing else to amuse him, diverted his sisters with the history of his sufferings,—being, he declared, cursedly in love with that strange girl, Miss Walsingham; so that, had not the winning affability of Rosa's manners, her accomplishments, and fine understanding triumphed over the meanness of her birth and situation, which even her
beloved

beloved patroness did not conceal, she must have been as nervous as the most fashionable and insipid patient on Dr. Farquhar's list : but as Delworth really had all those delightful resources which Lady Gauntlet described to be found at Mr. Woudbe's ; as besides she was at liberty to take her morning and evening rambles in the pleasant woods and fields ; and, as above all, she had just now proof of the continued regard of her patroness, in a message from that lady by her woman, requesting her to be in her dressing-room at eight the next morning, this chapter leaves our heroine as happy as any heroine ought to be, when there remains a long volume of her history to be written.

CHAP. V.

“ Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
 “ Her snaky crest.”

IF, according to Lord Shaftsbury, the most natural beauty in the world be honesty and moral truth, Rosa must have had great advantages over Lady Gauntlet, when overjoyed to obey her summons to the first *tele-a-tele* she had been honoured with at Delworth, and dressed with an exactitude of elegance, more in compliment to her patroness, than to gratify female vanity, she appeared before her in a small dressing room, commanding a still more charming view than the drawing-room below it.

The countess was sitting by the window, her head pensively resting on her white hand ; and though her fine face was overspread by a thoughtful cast, received Rosa very graciously ; and as it was hardly possible to behold the charming and variegated scene before them, without admiration, even though it were a common object, asked her opinion of the country, and the few people she had seen ; questioned her of the rambles she took, the walks she preferred, and at length, “ it
 has

has happened, Miss Walsingham," said she, "that having expressly brought you into the country for air and exercise, I have kept you to the letter of my invitation; air you cannot help having, and I am glad to hear you have taken exercise, but as to company, —come, own the truth, have you not thought us very dull?—Mrs. Woudbe, poor Mrs. Woudbe! I hope she will forgive me, but her trouble is amusing: She, I find, shuts herself up in all the high spirit of tragedy, and you cannot offer a syllable she will accept in mitigation of her despair. Well, as I expect she must be worse before she can be better, we say nothing of her;—but my daughters, how shall we excuse the reserve they have shewn to so good a young person? I am afraid there is a little envy at bottom."

"Envy!" exclaimed Rosa, "dear madam, what have I done to merit so severe a reproof? Envy *me!* *Your daughters*, so good, so lovely, so amiable and so happy, envy a poor outcast like me! Ah madam, I see I have lost your esteem."

"Nay, Miss Walsingham, you wrong me and yourself; but how will *you* account for the reserve I alluded to."

"Account for it! there can be no difficulty in that; can you imagine, madam, that, elated as I certainly am by your goodness, and the condescension of your conduct to a creature who owes you every thing, I forget how small my own claims to such distinction are? or that I

"Reach at stars because they shine on me;"

and am so giddy with the happiness, as not to be sensible of the importance of subordination, in all ranks of society? could I presume to lessen the distance Providence has placed between nobility and beggary? and could I, in particular, forget the respect due from the child of charity to the daughters of Lord Gauntlet, of my benefactress? Indeed madam, you know not how you wound me."

Lady Gauntlet paused.—"Really my dear," said she, "I can only say, those who do not envy, must,

must, I think, love you;—and my sons, what do you say of them—they behave better?”

Rosa coloured rather too haughtily for a beggar; but Lady Gauntlet made the *amende honorable*.

“Miss Walsingham,” said she, taking her hand, “I have devoted an hour this morning to chat with you.—Let me ask, do you not know my family name?”

Strange as it may appear, Rosa did not—She had never happened to hear them called Montreville, and really concluded the family name was Gauntlet.

“It is odd enough,” said her ladyship, “you should live with us so long, and not know we bear the name of Montreville.”

“Rosa’s astonishment is not to be expressed; “Montreville?” she repeated, hardly daring to respire—“Montreville!”

“Even so.—You are surprised; but what will you be, when I tell you we are related, nearly related to the Montreville you love;—nay, it is him who is our adversary in the law-suit, of which you have heard—him who deprives us of our title and estate.”

If any thing could add to the amazement of Rosa at this moment, it was the easy and collected manner Lady Gauntlet spoke of an event so important and distressing; but such was the exalted opinion she cherished of the wisdom and rectitude of her mind, which alone she thought could inspire fortitude on so trying an occasion, that it raised her still nearer the perfection which converts mere mortals into angels!—but Montreville! the cruel Montreville! ah, if he knew the woman he so distressed! whose children he deprived of the inheritance, to which they, at least thought, they were rightful heirs.

“I see,” continued the Countess, “the share you take in my concerns; but I have a volume to say to you, and we shall not be long alone: If you consider Mr. Montreville, I might, indeed, call him Lord Gauntlet, since a few days will declare him such; but if you consider him as *my* enemy, it will prepare you for an elucidation of his character you cannot suspect. I speak to you at present in confidence: Lord Gauntlet and I resign a title we should never have possessed,
had

had we known of this young man's existence; if you ever converse with him on the subject, have the goodness to tell him so."

Rosa converse with him! with Lord Gauntlet! she who had been so anxious to escape from explanations with respect to herself, when he was simple Mr. —; no, that was impossible.

"'Tis unlikely," said the Countess, "not impossible. My daughters are amiable, their accomplishments are more showy, but more superficial than yours;—their eldest sister married so preposterously, when she might have chosen among the first, that I will never risk the same misfortune by the same error, which was bringing her too early forward; they are equally ignorant of the predicament in which we stand, and of my certain and happy resource against its effect."

Rosa's face brightened.—Resource! happy and certain!—"Ah my dear protectress," cried she, "how you console, how you relieve me."

"You must remember, however, I speak in confidence—My son, Lord Delworth, is going to marry—can you guess to whom?—no, you would never suspect—it is the niece of that sordid traitor Sir Solomon Mushroom. Do you comprehend—can you conceive, the pang I inflict on myself, in giving my son a wife from such a stock?"

"Terrible!" replied Rosa; "it *must* be terrible."

"Yes," and the Countess's features retained nothing of their fascinating sweetness, "you was concerned about the law-suit; that I disdain; but to ally my favourite son to a wretch who is true to nothing!"—

"Oh my dear patroness, cried Rosa, weeping, "how I regret the hard necessity, for such I fear it is."

"Necessity! you are right—it is so; the world will meddle; and there is but one thing that will mollify its severity, and that is—"

"Innocence," interrupted Rosa, eagerly; "Innocence, conscious innocence, the only thing that will subdue unjust censure."

"Innocence!" replied the Countess scornfully, "innocence may possibly do a vast deal in your sphere;
in

in mine it is of small estimation; I must look down on my enemies; my retinue must be augmented; my establishment more splendid; my jewels more brilliant; and my equipage more superb; my carriage must be, not indeed less winning to my inferiors, but more haughty to my equals, and less obliging to my superiors. Innocence! how would innocence, unsupported by power or fortune, stand before the Woudbes and Mushrooms of this age. The power I *have*, and the fortune I *will* have. Sir Solomon Mushroom has been my creature; his fortune was amassed under my protection; and yet the ingrate would have sacrificed me and mine to the caprice of his low born relation;—but,”—and Lady Gauntlet’s dove-like eyes struck the fire of a hyena; her voice was raised; her teeth gnashed, as she uttered in a raised voice—“but I will be revenged! I will make his pride feed *mine*; the riches he has gained by *my* influence, shall be devoted to *me*! Yes, I will be amply *revenged*!”

Where now was the soul subduing mildness of the never-fading beauty? where, indeed, the beauty itself? The first, at this moment swallowed up in revenge; the last, deformed by passion;—and though her pliant features instantly resumed the smiling placidity which so well became them, Rosa was transfixed with surprise; and an express arriving on that instant, her ladyship instantly left her, speechless and confounded.

“Good heavens! had not her senses misled her? had she heard, had she seen, did she understand right? was it the gentle, the amiable, the conciliating angel, to whom she had looked up with veneration and respect; or was it a proud, irritated, implacable virago? was it, could it be Lady Gauntlet, who preferred money to innocence? Money!—was money, or any of the base uses to which ill people put it, to be held in competition with such a treasure as conscious innocence? and could Lady Gauntlet make such a preference without being herself guilty? she feared the severity of the world; the world she knew so well, and held in such contempt! and was it then possible she could have so acted as to fear, what so humble a being

as herself despised? and if she did fear it, if more, if she was conscious of deserving it, did not that imply that Montreville, her adversary, was the injured party;—and if so, Oh! cried she, exultingly,

“ ——— how comely it is, and how reviving
 “ To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
 “ When God, into the hands of their deliverers,
 “ Puts invincible might,
 “ To quell the might of the earth,
 “ ——— the oppressor.”

Yet surely Lady Gauntlet could not be this oppressor. No, the resentment that so transported her out of her amiable self, was against those who had implicated her, and her children in their guilt; and who was so likely to wrong the orphan, and injure the good, as the cold blooded Sir Solomon Mushroom? yes, him the Countess accused; and yet, why then hold the first of human felicities so cheap? why not rather glory in her own self-acquittal?”

Thus fluctuating between the guilty or not guilty, alternately acquitting the Countess, and offering a secret prayer for Montreville, she continued till summoned to the breakfast-room. After which, the Countess having dispatched her private business, the family and guests were summoned to attend her general inspection of the preparations for the grand wedding.

Variegated lamps, artificial flowers, pillars to look like marble, and painted canvases to look like clouds, did not divert Rosa's mind from the scene that so recently surprised her; and the penetrating Countess could not help seeing she had rather over-acted her part.

Mrs. Woudbe was as little inclined to be amused: her mind was in a chaos; she answered no for yes, and yes for no; and her little fat body was so much overbalanced by the weight of her mind, that as soon as she had walked through the litter, she leaned on Rosa, and retired to her chamber.

There, to the astonishment of her humble companion, the repressed anguish burst forth: she wrung her hands, beat her bosom, tore her hair, and acted the despairing

despairing fury, even more naturally, than her friend had done the revengeful one.

Rosa was not more astonished than hurt : she was sorry to see the poor woman in such agonies ; but as it was impossible for her to understand how the neglect of a natural brother could produce such absolute desolation, she could not apply consolation applicable to any less extraordinary evil, and therefore sat a silent witness of the extravagance of rage, and the lassitude of despair, till the dinner-hour—when Mrs. Woudbe pleading indisposition, a chicken was sent up, which Rosa partook.

Lady Gauntlet arose from table before the desert was removed to visit her afflicted guest, and dropped many hints, no doubt, by way of consolation, which were apparently as ill received by her to whom it was offered, as unintelligible to Rosa.

Mrs. Woudbe, to hide her indignation at the inferences Lady Gauntlet drew from the cause of her grief, pretended to be inclined to rest ; and her ladyship, smiling, invited Rosa to walk once more through the improvements,—she followed in silence.

The film, which the studied and long-practised deceit of the artful Countess had thrown over our heroine's native quickness of perception, began to clear : she now saw the same sweet smile, soft voice, and insinuating suavity of manner which had fascinated her, directed indiscriminately to all. The common workmen had their sugar ; their masters, plumbs. The sensibility and benevolence, so admirable as the spontaneous effusions of the heart, reduced to a system of policy, were disgusting as well as dangerous. While thus occupied in observation and reflection she followed the graceful step of her she so lately considered as the first of women ; the sudden arrival of Lady Louisa and Mr. Brudenel was announced, and, in the same instant, all the sisters, Lord Delworth, and Mr. Brudenel appeared, coming to their mother. Rosa's insignificance was never productive of more agreeable consequences, as she was left among the *fête-makers* to her own thoughts.

Though

Though the evening was very fine, after a very sultry day, the wind was rising, and the gardener foretold a storm, but assured her she might take her ramble, for that the weather would not change till night.

She accordingly took a new path through the wood; sometimes musing on the events of the last day; sometimes recurring to the past occurrences of her own life; sometimes pitying, at others wondering at Mrs. Woudbe; and oftener, as well as longer, dwelling on that splendour and those honours which would so well become the elegant Montreville, she found herself at the extremity of Delworth woods, and in the exact front of Denningcourt castle.

There was something extremely awful in the solemnity and grandeur of this venerable pile of building, silent and almost uninhabited as it appeared; she made an involuntary pause, but seeing a tall gentleman-looking man pass the ponderous gates, with a book in his hand, she hastily turned to another path.

An interview with Lord Denningcourt was by no means her wish, though she felt a curiosity to view every front of the antique castle to which chance had directed her ambulation: with this view she took a circular beaten path, which, instead of leading to the other front of the castle, brought her between a ridge of rocks to a side of the sea, where she sat down, contemplating the grandeur of the scene, not warned even by the last rays of the setting sun of the hour, till the great clock of the castle struck nine, when, recollecting that she must be a considerable distance from home, she took the path back; but, with all the speed she could make, the evening shut in so fast, as the wind continued to rise, that, by the time she reached the castle, objects were scarce discernable. As, however, she thought herself certain of finding the way, and as bad people about the roads were seldom heard of in that remote situation, she went on as fast as possible, sometimes even running, till her speed was arrested by the sound of human voices; and she presently heard Lord Denningcourt himself directing another person to Delworth.

She stepped a few paces out of the way while his lordship passed, to the castle, without noticing her; and then, regaining the path, resumed her former speech, intending to join the person, whoever it might be, going to Delworth; but in the moment when she could perceive his shade before her, recollecting there was near two miles to go, most of it through a wood, and as she now saw the person she was so eager to join, was a man, her heart failed; she stopped suddenly, and, to her terror and surprise, a voice cried "Halt!" she saw the figure before suddenly stop, and heard,

"In my school days, when I lost one shaft,
"I shot the fellow of the self same flight,
"The self same way, and——"

Rosa shrieked with joy: it was her dear humble friend John Brown. She felt not the ground, over which she almost flew, till clasped in his honest arms.

John accidentally met Lord Denningcourt as he was coming from the castle, which he had mistaken for Delworth House, and, ignorant of his quality, bluntly asked the nearest way to Delworth; but notwithstanding his lordship was very explicit, John had no sooner reached a cross path, than he entirely forgot the one he was directed to take.

"There is," said John, slipping the bundle containing his wardrobe off the end of his oaken stick, which, having first fixed it perpendicular, he let fall,

"There is a Divinity that shapes our steps,
"Rough hew them how we will."

As he was in the act of turning to the path where the stick pointed, after replacing his bundle on the end across his shoulder, "Mr. Brown! dear Mr. Brown! is it you?" cried Rosa.

Down dropped the wardrobe—

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!"

"Ah, Miss Rosy! in meeting you

"My soul hath her content so absolute,
"I had not another comfort like to this
"Succeeds in unknown fate."

"Oh,

“ Oh, Mr. Brown !” cried Rosa, “ where have you been ? and why did you not follow me when I parted from you ?”

John liked to answer methodically ; but the question puzzled him, inasmuch as he had been so bandied about by fortune, that it was much easier to tell why he did not follow her, than where he had been. The reason therefore being readier than the journal, he briefly answered, he was prevented following her by breaking his leg.

“ What ! the other leg ! oh, poor Mr. Brown !”

“ No, no, Miss Rosy,” quoth John, “ though

“ Pity is the virtue of the law,
“ And none but tyrants use it cruelly,”

you need not pity John Brown on that account ; the leg was a bad bit of a stick, made by as bad a carpenter ; and as I beckoned another coach just as yours drove off, in my haste to get into it, not being much used to coaches, I hitched my leg, so that it snapped ; and by the time I was lifted up, and hop’d into the public house, I had lost sight of you ; and then, Miss, I did as I do now—played the woman, and offered a few dollars, for I did not think it just to meddle with your gold, to any man that would run after your coach. The landlord was very sorry for my misfortunes, so he got a man would run any where for money ; but when I put my hand in my pocket, I had neither my bag of dollars nor your gold. Upon that, Miss, the landlord turned coat directly, and would have taken me up for being robbed, as he said such fellows were a nuisance, if I had not happened to have preserved my bundle, and that made an alteration ; so I left a silk handkerchief for a pot of beer, and got a carpenter to make me a leg, and so stumped home to my lodging, and next morning began a searching all over London for you ;—so you see I can’t tell you all the places where I have been ; but as I could not find you ; and as I had parted with part of my bundle, and as the king, God bless him ! did not want such soldiers as me, why I was obliged to seek a bit of bread where I could ;—and so, Miss, one way and another, I got to

watering of horses from place to place, till I made my way to Dunstable, where I saw you riding by ; and so, what with walking and riding, jobbing a bit here and a bit there, you see, Miss, here I am ; but no tale nor tidings can I hear of my poor wife, which, to be sure, is a great loss, as well as grief, both to me and her." And again John played the woman.

" My poor friend," cried Rosa, " I wish I could say we will part no more, and that thy troubles were ended."

" That, Miss, I fear will never be till I join my honoured colonel ; and if it were to-night, before to-morrow, I should not flinch. Alas ! Miss,

" ——— I, in mine own woe charm'd.

" Could not find death where I did hear him groan,

" Nor feel him when he struck."

Would I had closed the eyes of my poor master."

Rosa wept. " Ah ! my friend, when he fell—"

" All was lost, Miss ;—but don't you weep—you are young and beautiful, and great with the great ; though, to my mind, 'tis better to

" ——— be lowly born,

" And range with humble livers in content,

" Than to be perk'd up in a glittering grief,

" And wear a golden sorrow."

Though, to be sure, sorrow is sorrow, gold or not gold ; my poor Betty used to say, " fat sorrow is better than lean ;"—but, poor girl, I fear she has broken her heart. Betty had a goodish heart, Miss, for all she had such a way of shewing it."

While thus John Brown and Rosa walked and went, she who knew there was a wood to pass, and an ascent through it, expressed some doubts of having missed the right path ; but as John had followed the direction of his stick, and as, moreover, he was just then in the humour to enumerate all Betty's good qualities, he took on himself to be the guide, and so walked on.

" I sometimes think, Miss," continued John, " it might have been better for poor Betty, if she had not been in such a hurry to be married, for you see, Miss, she had a dull time of it—but here is the wood."

" Here

"Here is a wood!" replied Rosa; "but I fear not the one we—heavens, what is that!"

"Stand fast, Miss," said John, throwing off his bundle, and standing before Rosa, brandishing his stick—"don't tremble, Miss, I never did see a spirit before; and, by the blessing of God, as I never hurt the hair of any body's head, man, woman, or child, why I don't fear;—but it looks like nothing I ever saw living or dead—and, God forgive me! I believe it is my master."

"No, Mr. Brown—it has a female form."

"A female! alas, poor Betty! then it must be she."

A figure approached, with trembling unequal pace: it was in black flowing robes; its auburn hair covered its head and shoulders; it carried a taper in a glass shade, and, as it passed within a few paces of our heroine, she sunk to the earth. "It is! it is!" she faintly cried.

"Oh, my poor Betty! is it indeed her, Miss? I have looked a fired cannon in the mouth, but I could not look in the face of poor Betty's spirit. Lack-a-day! what can I do for her?"

"Oh, Mr. Brown!" cried Rosa, "assist me to follow—it is my dear departed major's"—

"The major," repeated John, "why Miss, do you think a soldier would go to disfigure his spirit, by wearing petticoats?"

"Only let us follow," cried Rosa, impatiently.

"Stop, Miss Rosa," said John, holding her—

"What, if it tempt you toward the flood,

"Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

"That beetles o'er his base into the sea,

"And there assume some other horrible form.

The light gleamed faintly through the foliage of distant trees, while Rosa struggled with John, 'till it totally disappeared—when he let her go.

"Ah my dear, Mr. Brown," cried Rosa, "how has your cruel kindness distressed me! what do you fear?"

"Fear! Miss Rosa"—

- “ If it be ought toward the general good,
“ Set honour in one eye, and death in the other,
“ And I will look on both indifferently.”

but this major's spirit—”

“ But this was no spirit; it is the dear truant my heart pants to recover. Oh Mr. Brown, indulge me; let us endeavour to retrace her steps; why should we, who never injured the living, fear the dead?”

John did not, for himself, fear either living or dead; and therefore thus conjured, he tossed his bundle into the brake, shouldered his stick, and drawing Rosa's arm under his own, marched on wherever an open path in the wood led, without again catching a glimpse of the light.

Weary, grieved, and disappointed, Rosa wept; while John, sorry he had, in his good meaning opposed her wish, kept a profound silence, till a sudden burst of thunder over their heads separated the black clouds which had been gathering the whole evening; and a flash of lightning striking on some dry under-wood, a few yards before them, set it in a blaze.

So narrow an escape from immediate death could not fail to affect Rosa; she hung trembling on John, covering her eyes with her hand, while the thunder continued to rumble at a greater distance; and after a few minutes, a second burst, with vivid flashes, nearer than the first, deprived her of sense.

John was now in a most perilous situation, holding the inanimate body of one whom, next his master, and Betty, had always been dear to him, and who, now the two most prized were lost, was all he valued on earth. Uncertain whether she was not struck dead, and expecting the same fate every moment himself, he ventured, while the wood was yet burning, and the lightning continued to flash incessantly, to look round, and by the blaze of the fire, distinguished a white building through the trees, which he approached as fast as, with his burthen, he could stump.

A small wicket opened under two large drooping willows, which over-hung the path so close that it was with great difficulty he reached a sort of porch, the door of which stood open; he now proceeded a few paces,

paces, till he reached a flight of steps, where he sat down, and to his unspeakable joy, found Rosa began to revive, but with all the horrors of the storm still impressed on her imagination.

In such a situation, the shelter they had gained, was extremely acceptable. John thought, by the smooth stones on which they trod, and the wide flight of steps, which he said he was sure were marble, they were in a church; and Rosa, coinciding in the idea, he advised proceeding as the pews would not be so cold, and the damp struck sensibly on them where they now were.

Again Rosa's arm was locked in John's, while with the other, and the aid of his stick, he explored the unknown region through which they were passing.

"I don't think, after all, it is a church," said John, "for the devil a pew or—"

A deep groan, evidently near, stopped him, and almost annihilated Rosa; she still hung on the supporting arm of John, while he convinced in his own mind that the figure they had seen, was, in fact, no more nor less than the ghost of some bad person, manfully roared out

"Let the great gods
 "That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
 "Find out their enemies now! Tremble thou wretch
 "That hast within thee undivulged crimes!
 "————— I am a man
 "More sinned against, than sinning."

The spirit, though thus exorcised, continued the most bitter moans:—Rosa involuntarily advanced; John, at first reluctantly followed, till finding her resolute, he pushed on, still feeling forward with his stick, till he reached some sort of termination to the place; turning round to cheer his trembling companion, he fixed his back against what proved a door, which flying open laid the wooden-legged hero on his back, and discovered to the eager gaze of Rosa, the very figure she had so earnestly wished to follow in the wood.

It was kneeling on the ground before a sort of stand, strewed with fresh flowers; its white arms were folded on its whiter bosom; from its up-cast eyes tears seemed to roll down its pale cheeks; it was convulsed with sighs: "O my father! my dear father! pity!

forgive!" it distinctly uttered:—When the door flew open it started up, it trembled, it shrieked and fled.

Rosa also shrieked;—"Kattie, my dear, dear Kattie," she cried, "will you not stay one moment? will you not speak to me? not speak to Rosa, the grateful friend of the father you invoked?"

No answer was returned; Rosa advanced; the taper was left; she looked round; horror seized her; "Oh my friend," cried she, "we are in a receptacle for the dead."

"God help us!" cried John, "'tis however better than being dead ourselves."

"Oh that the dear girl would but have spoken to me! where can she exist! oh what can be her motive to become the sad visitor of this dreadful place, at such an hour!"

"Don't frighten yourself, Miss, with thinking about the matter;

"Infected be the air on which they ride,
"And damn'd all those that trust in them."

you see 'tis a spirit, and nothing else but yourself was ever half so handsome, alive or dead, so let us be off."

"Stop, my friend," said Rosa, having taken the taper in her hand, "here, a poor beggar, like me, or a poor cripple, like you, may approach all, that when living, would have spurned us for our miseries. See what trophies adorn that nich; there rests the dust of some great general; and here the coronet and cushion—heavens! what do I see! Denningcourt!—this then is the mausoleum of the Denningcourts. See, here is a coffin quite fresh—'Wentworth, thirteenth Earl of Denningcourt, obit.'—ah, not two years.—What a place for youth and beauty to select for meditation."

John had by this time arisen from the ground, and found his supporter, the oaken stick; "Yes," said he, looking round, "you all

"Are melted into air, into thin air;
"And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
"The solemn—"

"Ah Mr. Brown," cried Rosa, "look here."—

'Tis

'Tis a baby's coffin, Miss—and a very pretty one—quite fresh too."

"Oh read, read!"—the tears fast flowed from Rosa's eyes, as she removed the fresh flowers from a small coffin on tressels, by which the figure in black knelt, while John read

"As is the bud cut by an envious worm,

"Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to heaven,

"Or dedicate his beauty to the sun."

"'Tis Shakespear's, Miss," said John, with an air of exultation.

"Oh, I too fatally understand this!" cried Rosa.

"That," replied John, "is Shakespear's particular beauty; any child may understand, what the most learned cannot fail to admire."

"And, what is here? I cannot read, my tears blind me;" and the drops fell from her eyes on a silver breast plate of the coffin.

John hoped to find more of his adored author, and read, "Wentworth, infant son of Wentworth, fourteenth Earl of Denningcourt, born April 16th, 17—died June 5th following:

"All more than common menaceth an end."

"That's not Shakespear, Miss, and you see the difference; a child cannot understand that—"

Rosa, with her eyes fixed on the infant coffin, retraced such a combination of circumstances, as convinced her the solution of this mystery was to be found at Denningcourt-castle; and the certainty that Mr. Brown's stick had failed in pointing to the right path, led to the natural conclusion, that, instead of going towards Delworth, they had, by a retrograde movement, turned towards Denningcourt.

That this mausoleum, which indisputably belonged to the family, could be at no great distance from that, or some other habitation, was certain, as Kattie could not have rambled bare headed, alone at that hour, far from her residence.

While she revolved on this circumstance and compared it with Lady Gauntlet's report, that Lord Denningcourt vegetated in a corner of his old castle, with

a girl of whom he was fond, she heard the sound of approaching feet, and a voice, half reproach and half tender, call, "where are you, my dear girl? why?—Astonishment! Miss Walsingham! for God's sake, what has brought you here? where is?"—he looked round with anxiety.

"Ah, Lord Denningcourt, where indeed is the lovely, the dear Kattie Buhanun?"

"You know her!—I am surprized!—I thought she was here:—But how?—I have heard of a Mrs. Walsingham, but not—"

"Oh!" and Rosa wrung her hands in agony, "if that dear woman had seen the child of her lov'd friend, as I this night have seen her!"—

Lord Denningcourt was no longer at this moment, he was all animation;—"where," said he, "is she?"

Rosa could not speak, but pointed the way she fled: He instantly left her; and in half a minute she heard him call for assistance; she snatched up the taper, and rushing after, found Kattie a few paces from the entrance of the mausoleum, in convulsions, his lordship supporting her, and a female attendant chafing her temples.

John's assistance was now of great service; they proceeded, by Lord Denningcourt's direction, a short cut through the wood, and having crossed an angle of the park, reached the castle, which they entered by a back way, and the servants assisting, Kattie was very soon laid on her bed, where she slowly recovered from her fit, and recognized our heroine with a burst of tender joy, as the amiable, the good, the virtuous Rosa, the friend of her beloved father, the monitor of her dear innocent sisters, and hanging round her neck, shed a torrent of tears.

Rosa returned her embrace with unaffected sincerity; but the joy of meeting was, on neither side, unmixed with painful sensations.

Rosa had, at last, found the daughter of her deceased friend, but now found her? in the exact situation, though not with the person whom she suspected,—lost to the world, to her friends, and to honour; she, whose beauty was, in the partial estimation of her friends,

Friends, a gem of that rare value, that should command the world, was shut up from every eye, but a few rustic domestics, mourning for the offspring of her guilt; all her present and future peace depending on the frail tenure of a man's fancy, to whom nothing was new under the sun; with so much obloquy attached to her situation, it would be injurious even to her, to be known only to remain one night with her.

Kattie, on her part, was overwhelmed with shame: she knew the purity of Rosa's mind, and never had she stood in so much awe of the rectitude of her principles, as at this moment, when the dejected and thoughtful silence, which succeeded her first joyful emotions at meeting subsided, and the coldness and even aversion, with which she scarce noticed the compliments of Lord Denningcourt, were an explanation of feelings that went to her heart; she however begged Lord Denningcourt would have the goodness to leave her alone with the friend of her youth; and again, on his complying with her request, hid her face and wept.

Rosa's tears accompanied the anguish of poor Kattie, whom, after mourning for so long, she found weak and scarce recovered from confinement: After having brought a son into the world, whom, in the same instant that it filled her young heart with new cares, and awakened it to inexpressible delights of maternal fondness, she had seen expire in her arms. In the agonies of grief, into which this incident threw her, she had no associate:—Lord Denningcourt's former life had been too busy, his pleasures too indiscriminate, and his mind too volatile to be at once reconciled to so mortifying a change as living in an old castle with *one* woman, though that one was a master-piece of nature, without society, and almost without attendants; and poor Kattie, whose sensible mind and real fine understanding had been entirely neglected, while she had been made a perfect adept in all personal endowments, had no resource against the indifference which he had good nature himself enough to regret, but retiring to a corner of her high-roofed chamber, and there, under the gilded remains of former grandeur,
mourn

mourn that fall from innocence which included every other misfortune.

She had been content to exchange general admiration for the vows of eternal constancy of one dear object; with him, and for him, she retired from the world; for his sake she had left her fond mother, her family and friends,—for was he not all in one!

Fascinated by the delicious delirium of present joy, she had no apprehension of a change in her lover which she felt it was impossible could ever happen in herself, till the listless ear, the vacant eye, the weary yawn, and a conviction that those we love are never answered with monosyllables, roused her from fond security, banished all the delusions of the heart, and left her on a fearful precipice, shuddering at the gulph beneath.

Lord Denningcourt's valet and first footman, who had made fortunes during the reign of prodigality, were attached to his person; and, as they followed his fallen fortunes, could not fail to be high in his favour.

They had been long in the habit of perceiving, even before he was himself sensible of change, when a lady was in danger of becoming a falling favourite,—the symptoms were certain,—and Kattie might give orders, she might ring till the wires broke,—those gentlemen had much more of their lord's real favour, at present, than herself, and would neither say nor sing a note more or less than exactly pleased themselves.

Kattie had pride and discernment; but the insolence of the servants were trifles, in comparison with the coldness of their lord; and though one was the natural effect of the other, it was that which she regretted, not that which she suffered, that affected her health, injured her beauty, and effectually destroyed the vivacity so necessary to kill ennui in an old castle.

But while Kattie bore her misfortunes with meekness, and while she would not appear to notice the neglect of the servants, a woman, who waited on her, was kept in a constant state of irritation by them, and made their behaviour, the perpetual subject of her harangues and complaints: "These fellows," she would say, in the hearing of Kattie, "treat me as if I was dirt under their feet: *me*, who had a good character, and
have

have lost it by coming here to wait on a kept mistress; *me*, who have lived in credit; *me*, who have always served married ladies before I came here, to lose my character, and be insulted by such fellows!"

Poor Kattie's present feelings evinced none of that insensibility which belonged to her former character:—If she recollected the flattery of native friends, it was with bitter condemnation of their want either of judgment or sincerity; if she saw that face in a mirror, which had engrossed so much of her time, and which had been so often contemplated with exultation, it was to mourn the fatal beauty that at so early a period of life reduced her to such exquisite misery; and if, in search of a particle of consolation, she turned her aching thoughts on those whose love was not the effect of appetite, self-gratification, or local circumstance; on her honoured father, her tender mother, innocent sisters, she involuntarily hid her face, and rushed to the most retired of the open apartments, to hide, if possible, from herself; and all the sad comfort of her existence were nightly visits to the cold remains of her lost child.

These were the confessions which, drowned in tears and hanging in anguish round her neck, the miserable girl committed to the confidence of the sympathizing Rosa;—but what could Rosa do to alleviate the misfortunes of a young creature, in whom error was rooted, by an attachment to the object of her first love; against the fond tie that bound her to her seducer how weak were all the arguments, virtue suggested, or interest could offer; nay, how weak even the conviction that she was no longer dear to him.

Rosa represented the miserable state of her mother; described her distraction at her loss; and even left an opening for her to believe, the marriage with Frazer was in consequence of the imbecility grief left on her mind;—she urged the honour of a family, which, every hour that she continued with Lord Denningcourt, was more deeply wounded; and lastly, informed her of the fortunate return of Colonel Buhanun's servant, by whose information, it was now probable, his property, to a large amount, would be recovered,—

sufficient

sufficient she hoped to give independence to the children of the major.

To all these arguments Kattie was deaf:—"No," said she, "I left my mother, and for that fatal crime my heart is torn with remorse; I will not risk a feeling more bitter and that would destroy me, by leaving him whom I consider as my husband; if I am left by *him*, I will hide my shame and misery together,—but never return to those friends I have wounded, and that family I have disgraced.

Rosa wept:—"What then, my dearest Kattie, can be done to soften the severity of your fate? what shall I say to you? I, even I, must not—"

"I know it, dear Rosa,—I know it;—you would lose your own character; by consoling the miserable, you would be accused of approving the errors humanity impelled you to deplore; your virtue would be thought contaminated by receiving into your pure bosom the tears of a penitent; you dare not forgive whom you pity;—and when strict chastity of sentiment assimilates with practice, all this is right; the distinction should be broad and glaring; it is then a beacon to the innocent, and a just punishment to the fallen.—Oh Rosa! if I, who had every advantage of birth, fond parents, and partial friends; I, who ungratefully dishonoured the one, and abandoned the other;—if, after planting daggers in the heart of my mother, and covering my innocent and amiable sisters with shame; if I found it easy to regain that high eminence where you, who are alone in the world, supported only by your own right sense and innate honour, equally destitute of friends, fortune, and protectors, so firmly stand, where would be the crown of the virtuous? where the sting of guilt?"

Rosa was no less surprised than charmed at sentiments which misery had in so short a time matured; and the more absolute the necessity for her abandoning the dear girl, the more reluctant she felt to do it.—"If you will not leave Lord Denningcourt?"

"I cannot,—do not wish to leave him."

"Will you consent to my acquainting your guardian with your situation?"

"Oh

“ Oh no !—the Doctor would hold himself bound to tear me from my lord, not only as my guardian, but as my father’s friend : Oh Rosa, as the friend of my dear, my honourable father, will he not.”—

Again she threw herself on Rosa’s bosom ; who, unable to combat the dreadful meaning of her last objection, mingled tears with her, till it was quite daylight, when she prepared to take, what she feared must be a last leave, of the weeping Kattie.

Lord Denningcourt’s rest had not before been broken by Kattie’s nocturnal visits to the remains of his son :—he had at first objected to, and then laughed at them ; but happening to recollect on this night the wooden-legged man, who, with breath impregnated with amber, had enquired his way to Delworth, it struck him that his enquiries might be a mask of some villainous design ; and, on advancing to the window, seeing the fond mother slowly crossing the path of the park, which led to the mausoleum, and enter the wood which surrounded it, alarmed for her safety, he rung for her servant, and ordered her to follow her mistress.

The woman, out of humour and premeditating to leave her place, could not be prevailed on to enter the sanctuary of the dead, at that lone hour, for a mistress, who, as her influence diminished, she felt little inclined to respect.

Lord Denningcourt had certainly outlived his first passion for Kattie, but humanity and courage were ingrafted in his nature ; the one induced him to insist on the woman’s following her mistress, and the other impelled him to follow her.

On returning from the apartment, he had a curiosity to learn what possible connection there could be between so beautiful and lady-like young person as Miss Walsingham, and the shabby-looking cripple with whom he found her, and who had followed her to the castle.

John, though he had in the meantime been regaled in the servants’ hall much to his heart’s content, was very guarded in his answers to Lord Denningcourt ; but when that nobleman spoke in a high strain of encomium of the fair stranger, as he called Rosa, John

was

was no longer master of his secret; he gave Rosa's history with all the simple grace of honest affection—declaring she was right heir to all Colonel Buhanun's fortune;—but as

“ The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
 “ Do make instruments to scourge us,”

why it must go to the children of one Major Buhanun, who, poor things, little expected such a wind fall.

This was an interesting piece of intelligence to Lord Denningcourt; he could not but be anxious to secure that independance for the young creature he had ruined, which it was not in his own power to give her, he knew nothing of the finances nor arrangements of her father; but, judging from the extravagance of her mother, supposed Kattie had no dower but her beauty; returned to her apartment, on hearing that the ladies were about to separate, when he heard from Rosa a confirmation of the pleasing intelligence, and unwilling to defer a business of such interest and importance, proposed sending an immediate messenger to the guardians.

To this Rosa objected. She had it as much at heart to secure a comfortable asylum for John's age, as to serve the children of the major, and chose he should himself be the bearer of his own good tidings.

Kattie, who appeared totally uninterested in the event, declared she would rather die a beggar than let her guardian know her situation; and expressed herself with such vehemence on the subject, that Lord Denningcourt immediately dropped all other concern in the business than to advise, since she was so averse to have her situation known, that the honest creature with the wooden leg should remain at Denningcourt till Miss Walsingham's dispatches were ready: he could, he said, trust his own servant with the management of him; but if once Lady Gauntlet got the smallest hint, she would not rest till she was in possession of the business, which would also include every thing connected with it.

Rosa could not, in the present tumult of her mind, decide on the right or wrong of this plan; she indulged
 a fort

a sort of latent hope, that if Colonel Buhanun's assets were what John insisted, Kattie might, with her share of the major's fortune added to it, be no contemptible wife for an indigent man of quality; and she was anxious to have an asylum settled for her poor friend Brown. The only objection, therefore, to dispatch him immediately from Denningcourt, was that suggested by Kattie, in respect to the worthy Doctor Cameron.

This, however, was soon obviated; for John having, in consequence of the heat of the weather, and his dusty station on the outside of the stage, swallowed a hearty draught of amber at every house where it stopped, his head had been so confused, that he had not the smallest conception madam at the castle was a Scotchwoman. Rosa, therefore, as her heart and her honour condemned her for every moment she now remained under Lord Denningcourt's roof, left to him the management of honest John's journey; and promising to send the letters for him to Denningcourt as soon as she could arrange them, tore herself from the tears and embraces of the unfortunate Kattie, and, accompanied by John, who, entreating to see her at least part of the way, she made ride with her in a low garden chair, the only carriage kept at the castle, while the footman walked near the head of the horse, she set off towards Delworth, and during the short ride, gave John instructions for his conduct both before and after his arrival at Edinburgh.

Having reached the back gate of the house, shaken hands, and said as many kind things as she had spoken words, she alighted, and was already within the gates.

"Ah, Miss Rosy!" said John.

Rosa stopped.

"Oh, Miss Rosy!"

"Should we be taking leave

"As long a term as yet we have to live,

"The lothness to depart would grow——"

Rosa waved her hand.

John mournfully turned his head as the footman turned the chaise homeward, and cried, with a slow flourish of his arm,

"What!"

“What! gone without a word!

“Aye, so true love should do: it cannot speak;

“For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.”

“By your leave, Mr. Timbertoe,” said the footman, “I will ride with you back, instead of that pretty young lady; and if you’ll take my advice, dry up your tears;—what the devil signifies snivelling; and as to talking of true love, d——e ’tis a bore.”

“Ah!” cried John,

“A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,

“We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;

“But were we burthened with like weight of pain,

“As much or more we should ourselves complain.”

The man stared, but did not think such nonsense worth any more of his wit; so the garden chair having conveyed them back to Denningcourt, the valet first tried on John a plain suit of mourning and some linen of his own, which happened to fit; then shewed him to a bed in his chamber, and left him to rest.

CH A P. VI.

“I find this pretty, said Gargantu, when his mare, a beast of quality, laid waste the neighbouring woods.”

IT was near fix when Rosa passed through a wilderness of sweets to Delworth House, where the only domestic stirring was the dairy-maid, who, rejoicing at her return, hastened to tell how the family were alarmed at her absence; how the servants had been sent different ways in search after her; and how sorry they all were she was not found.

Rosa thanked the girl for her solicitude, and went immediately to her chamber, when it struck her, for the first time, that it would be indispensibly necessary to adduce some motives for absenting herself during a whole night—not only to the principals, but even to the domestics of the family where she resided.

To

To reveal the name and family of the unfortunate mistress at Denningcourt castle, was what she resolved not to do; yet how to avoid it, without leaving a stigma on her own character, was the point that distressed her. She remembered the late-discovered traits in the character of Lady Gauntlet which proved her not the all-perfect creature she once esteemed her; but while she had the honour to reside under the earl's roof, no doubt the countess would expect the elucidation of so extraordinary a step, nor would Mrs. Woudbe feel less anxious that a young person under her protection, should clear every imputation on her character.

The more she reflected, the more difficult appeared her situation; and she at length resolved to reveal all the circumstances in confidence to Lady Gauntlet, whose wisdom and policy she had so often admired, and be guided by her in respect to the explanations proper to be given to the family.

Having thus settled this embarrassing point, her next consideration was, that it would be little less indelicate to have any connections at the castle, than to repeat her visits there; and therefore, the sooner she made up her packet for John, the sooner he would set off to Scotland, and the sooner also would all ostensible intercourse at Lord Denningcourt's cease.

Colonel Buhanun's letters were a treasure that always made part of her baggage; and her mind being too much agitated for sleep, she arranged the packets before her, according to their several dates; and having spread a napkin on the carpet to receive those not relevant to the point she had at heart, she selected those that were, and inclosing them with a letter from herself to Doctor Cameron in one envelope, was on the point of sealing it, when, recollecting one particular letter of the colonel's, in which his faithful servant was more warmly mentioned than in those she had selected, which were not among the rest, she removed some clothes to search for it; with such impetuosity, that a small box, committed to her especial care by Mrs. Woudbe, dropped down; the lock burst, and a number of papers falling out, they mixed promiscuously with the colonel's letters.

A more

A more vexatious accident could not happen to one who, of all the descendants of Eve, had the least disposition to pry into other people's affairs.

But as regret for the accident would not replace the papers in the box, her first thought was to lock her chamber-door, acquaint Mrs. Woudbe with what had happened, and request her to divide the papers herself; but, like many others of the first thoughts of sages under twenty, that would not do; for, in that case, all the directions of her own letters would be seen, and must lead to explanations as unpleasant to Lady Gauntlet as disagreeable to herself, since she could not allow the having been known by two names, without assigning a motive, which would directly contradict the good report given of her by that lady when she declared the family and connection of our heroine were perfectly known to her.

Besides, Mrs. Woudbe was still either in the arms of Morpheus, or she was calling down the vengeance of the gods on her cruel natural brother; in either case, her bed was not likely to be discarded for the finest morning that ever shone out of the heavens; and waiting for her rising, would retard the packet for John, and delay his journey to the north. Well then, on second thoughts, which most people think best, why should she hesitate about dividing the papers herself? sure her discretion, and more, her honour, would stand the test of her own secret tribunal; and well might others doubt, who doubted themselves.

Behold her, then, on her knees, dividing and subdividing. The covers were all addressed to her, and the hand-writing that of the dear natural brother: one packet only lay among the rest about which she was doubtful, as it was inclosed in an envelope, without seal or address.

Rosa had employed some of her leisure hours, since she had been at Delworth, in copying some sonnets from the Welch bards—a collection she had never seen before; and as it was an expensive one, thought it likely she might never meet it again: these she had folded up in a blank sheet, and put carelessly among her papers.

Now

Now, whether the cover she held in her hand was that, or whether it were part of Mrs. Woudbe's precious deposit, could only be proved by opening: it was not the sonnets—that was clear at the first glance; but a combination of letters, more musical than all Handel's composition, arrested every sense: this was—

“Your faithful and adoring

“H. MONTREVILLE.”

She sunk on the ground, turned first red, then pale, and indeed experienced the several sensations inseparable from the divine passion, when the heart is rather disposed

“To suffer love as a painful sentiment, than to enjoy it as an agreeable emotion,”

from which she recovered, as is usual in such cases, on a sudden recollection, which had neither rhyme nor reason in it.

The little portmanteau, which had been the companion of her humble travels, lay conveniently enough in Mrs. Woudbe's travelling trunk;—in it she had packed her papers and other *petites affaires*, together with the box entrusted to her care. Now, as the “faithful and adoring Montreville” could not be addressed to any creature but herself, it was clear as the sun, which at that moment, three quarters past seven, gilded the hemisphere, that the Pontefract chambermaid had been prevailed on to slide this precious letter into the little portmanteau, which the most scrupulous delicacy did not forbid her now to read.

With trembling fingers, burning cheeks, and beating heart, then, she read,

“My dearest woman,”—bold enough, however, and not vastly polite, she thought—“*how could you so cruelly disappoint me?*”—well, that was better.—“*To be sure, my dearest, pretty crater,*”—heavens! could that be Montreville? and to Rosa? sure he must have been delirious!—“*you must know, nothing is so dare to me as your dare self. I kept my eye on Madam Devil-dom—what's her cramp name's door.*”—“What stuff is here!”

here!" cried Rosa, turning the paper again to look at the signature. "Yes, it is Montreville—'H. Montreville.' The man must have been deranged!" She, however, proceeded, till the paper dropped from her nerveless fingers.

While, therefore, the room turns round with Rosa; while, even when scorched by the sun, the world is to her one black curtain, and while she staggers to the window for air, the reader is presented with the whole of the extraordinary letter.

"My dearest woman,

"How could you so cruelly disappoint me? To be shure, my dare pretty crater, you must know, nothing is so dare to me as your dare self. I kept my eye on Madam Devildom—what's her cramp name's door; but oh! Hyenna! as you are, you never came at all, but sent my pretty correspondent. Devil take me, my charmer, if I was not in such a hurrecan of a fury, that faith, I was near beating up your quarters to brake every bone in your ugly husband's skin; and, to be shure, if love for you, my dare woman, had not come in in the nick, I dare say my passion would have told him all, and more too; for if a man loves a dare woman to death, he is used like a dog;—and how, my dare crater, can you think the great blood boiling over in my veins can stoop to receive obligations from any dare hand but your own. If you think to deceive me, faith, my dare woman, you reckon wrong—for I shall hate you; and when a man hates a dare woman after she has made him happy, stop him who can? So, my charming woman, let us be faithful and loving, and not do things by deputy—by way of witnesses.—I saw Miss Walsingham go to Crox; but though the cause stands still for want of cash, I scorn to take the baubles from any but yourself; and I advertise you I have changed my lodging; but you may write to the old place. The affair comes on directly—nothing wanting but my dearest woman to be true to her faithful and adoring

"H. MONTREVILLE."

"N. B. Consider, dare woman, this masquerade is nothing to what you will treat all the world with when
you

you are a Countess; and may the next thing I put in my mouth be poison if I, when I am Earl of Gauntlet, don't give your husband the go-by, and let him prove himself a cuckold, which is a genteeler thing than a dirty commoner has any right to expect, and marry you, my dear woman, next day."

If the reader expects to be told with what alternate burst of anguish and indignation Rosa read the letters of "the faithful, adoring Montreville," it is an unreasonable expectation: for no language is equal to the task. True, it had not come to her hands by the direct and fair means that would justify the sentiments it inspired, to those who had in their own hearts the best reason for doubting the veracity of others; but Rosa was not now to learn that criminality is attached to the motive, not the event of our actions; nor that equity weighs the former, while frailty and prejudice are guided by the latter.

Self-acquitted then; nothing could divert her horror and astonishment from the mystery, wickedness and cunning of the letter, which proved that Montreville, presumptive heir to the Earldom of Gauntlet and Mrs. Woudbe's pretended natural brother, was one and the same person, and a confederate in a scene of iniquity too evident for candour's self to doubt.

The just indignation Rosa conceived, on finding she had been the convenience of a licentious commerce, was followed by a detestation of Mrs. Woudbe, and compassion for her husband; such atrocious wickedness, such ingratitude, never, never, Rosa was sure, could have been before committed by a matron, a mother (almost a grandmother); one to whom so many looked up, but, on whom all who *knew* her, must look down. Nothing, indeed, less than the evidence of her senses, having been innocently employed in the horrid business, having seen him watch her to La Croix's, and supposing he would indeed be an Earl, could convince her "such things are."

But Rosa had not lived with ladies of Utopia in the year 1797; and therefore, warm with repentment for the degrading insult offered her character by the imposition, with the letter in her hand, scalding tears on her cheek,

cheek, and her face and neck burning with heat, she appeared unannounced, before Lady Gauntlet in her dressing-room.

Her ladyship, it has been before observed, lost no time in any of her arrangements : she was now up, and had not only made inquiry after Rosa, but knew where she had passed the night ;—not that she was an absolute witch ; for the good creature, whose character suffered by waiting on poor Kattie, having once been a useful domestic of Lady Gauntlet's, continued to pay her court, by bringing or sending to Delworth, anecdotes as they occurred at Denningcourt-castle ;—among these, that the most welcome, was the certainty that the poor mistress was a falling favourite.

The countess's passion was, as the philosopher said of the *passions* of young men, “ Not truly in her heart, but in her eyes, and always inflamed after every interview.” She had, for the first time since her arrival at Delworth, met Lord Denningcourt, in her ride, on the morning before ; and as it was an established maxim with her, that nothing inspires so strong an inclination for a new mistress, as being her sily tired of an old one ; and though she had already more affairs on her hands than any woman beside herself could possibly manage ; and though his lordship neither paid nor received any visits, she sent him a card, inviting him to meet her, on *business*, in a pretty temple at the extremity of Delworth woods, adjoining his own demesne.

Lord Denningcourt, though punctual to time and place, was so insufferably stupid, that her ladyship was quite out of patience, and would have been at a loss for *business* to entertain him with, had not her kindness to Rosa, on his account, occurred.

Lord Denningcourt admired Rosa's beauty, but she had not interested his passions ; he knew Mrs. Woudbe well, and he was intimate with Lord Aron Horsemagog : he could therefore readily credit the report which, thro' his valet, reached him of that nobleman's adding the companion of such a woman to his list. He certainly thought our heroine's countenance innocent and interesting ; but as he had thought so of many other countenances, which he afterward discovered to be visors, there

there was nothing extraordinary in the affair; he therefore yawned cold thanks, played with his dogs, complained of time, and sauntered off, leaving the fair lady so mortified, disappointed and enraged, that, strange to tell, she actually wept.

But such strangers as tears were not to be encouraged on Lady Gauntlet's downy cheeks; despising Lord Denningcourt, and even herself, she returned home to smile; and be all grace and goodness; but spite of her entire command of features, the contempt with which the bewitching Denningcourt had treated her, banished sleep from her eyes; and a note from the handmaid at the castle, delivered before she was up next morning was ill calculated to smooth her brow when Rosa entered; who, besides the culpable appearance which staying out all night gave her character, had now, and that unsuspected by herself, the jealous pride of a vindictive woman to appease.

At Denningcourt! Miss Walsingham at Denningcourt! there then, was a solution of Lord Denningcourt's coldness, not only to his mistress, for that was natural enough, but to her, which was as unnatural; Oh, the specious, deceitful thing!

The "specious, deceitful thing" was now before her, agitated, trembling, and panting for breath; she presented the open letter to the countess, and overcome by a variety of struggling passions, sunk on the sofa, without noticing the frown of her patroness. Nothing mortal occupied her, but the arch dissembler, Montreville, and the despicable Mrs. Woudbe.

Lady Gauntlet having read the letter through, without betraying any of those marks of indignant surprise Rosa expected, coolly demanded how it came into her hands? "You have not, Miss, I hope," said she, "betrayed any confidence to get it?"

"Confidence!" repeated Rosa—her face in a glow.

"Confidence is not less sacred, Miss, because some trifling censure may happen to be attached to the person who reposes it."

Trifling censure! the words rung hollow on Rosa's ear, but did not prevent her exonerating herself from the implied accusation.

Lady Gauntlet answered with *sang froid*, that it was mighty well ; in the intercourse of the world, it was often necessary to be ignorant of what one knew, and totally forget what one remembered :—there was but one thing in the letter she did not comprehend.

One thing ! and but *one thing !* heaven and earth ! was this Lady Gauntlet ? was it a wife—a mother ? was it, indeed, according to her idea of womanhood, a woman ?

“ What is all this about the jewels ? ” asked the Countess.

Rosa’s answer, would have been unintelligible to any person less acute and experienced than her beautiful ladyship ; but, as we have said of Lord Denningcourt, nothing was new to her under the sun, except the precise feelings which at this moment wrung her heart,—“ wounded pride, and ill requited love,” or some such passion ; and it was with secret triumph she saw the heart of her innocent rival flatter through her tucker with emotions somewhat similar.

“ I told you,” said she, with one of her best smiles, “ the young man’s character would open as you knew him better :—he is really a clever fellow, with his pretty creature ! Only that poor Woudbe is below ridicule, or this would be a companion to the jewels of the Portuguese. Upon my honour, Miss Walsingham, it is paying you a sony compliment to prefer Woudbe to you ; but men are capricious animals ; I advise you, if not too late, to shun them.”

Rosa’s fixed eyes were on the Countess really starting out of her head.

“ This Montreville,” continued the Countess, “ knows what he is about ; he has *fairly* taken Woudbe in—I say *fairly*, because her intrigues have been too various to be suspected of sacrificing interest to a passion she has worn to rags ; but, like her husband, he lays out her property to advantage : he must marry her—no man of honour or honesty can go from such a promise.”

“ *Honour and honesty !* ” repeated Rosa, with contempt.

“ Are they not synonymous, Miss Walsingham ? ”

“ Not

“Not exactly, I believe, madam. Every honest man will certainly be a man of honour; but every man of honour, such at least, as I have lately heard so distinguished, is—”

“Not honest, perhaps, you think. How accurately you distinguish!—but don’t be too severe; you are jealous child—you don’t like a rival—few people do. What would you say, if you were obliged to resign a title and its appendages—and your *friend*, if you please—entertained you with anticipations of an event that would invest her with the honours you lost? This I *have* borne,—and how do you think I *could* bear it? Why by more certain anticipations of the downfall of her card-houses. But really I begin to think I shall have the honour to congratulate her countessship after all; the man has so committed himself—”

Rosa’s clasped hands, uplifted eyes, and the horror and aversion portrayed in every speaking feature, interrupted her ladyship: she scarce articulated, “The confidant! are you then the confidant of such a transaction? what mystery, what shocking mystery, what enchantment is this? how can the tongue expatiate on female honour? how can it profess to adore virtue, when the heart is so tainted?”

Lady Gauntlet arose. “How dare—”

“Spare your passion, Lady Gauntlet—my fear of you expired with my respect.”

“And is this the return for my kindness,—my condescension?”

“Yes, madam, by kindly placing me under the roof of an infamous woman, you have insulted me; and by condescending to act a part under her, you have degraded yourself, your sex, your family, and your children.”

It was now Lady Gauntlet who was confounded: she had, presuming on the uniform mildness of Rosa’s character fancied she could frown her to an atom; instead of which, it was herself who was awed,—it was however, but for a moment.

“Keep your temper, Miss,” said she—“I am a confidant, though not *yours*, of your sleeping last night at Denningcourt castle; and surely, if people should

be so malicious as to fix a stigma on such a step, and if regard for the honour of my family should oblige me to discard a young person who so offended decency, as to make a nocturnal visit to a nobleman of Lord Denningcourt's character, my subsequent knowledge of the transaction would not implicate me in the guilt."

"If it were as easy, madam, for your friend to prove her honour, as it is for me to manifest my innocence——"

"What then," and a ray of pleasure darted from Lady Gauntlet's eyes, "you deny you was at Denningcourt castle?"

"No, I do not."

"You did not sleep there?"

"No, I did not."

"Nor stay there the night?"

"Yes, I did."

"Imprudent wretch! leave my presence before I spurn you hence."

Rosa did as she was commanded, secretly rejoicing that the discovery of Mrs. Woudbe's infamy, had preceded the unlimited confidence she meant to have placed in Lady Gauntlet. Her dismissal from the family was, as she now considered it, a thing of course; and though it reduced her to the necessity of seeking another situation, she had Mr. Garnet's comfortable asylum: thither she resolved to go, after John was dispatched to Scotland. She immediately closed the packet for him;—but the sending it off, was a matter of more difficulty than might be expected, from a house where there were so many domestics, by those who do not understand the magic, that in an instant conveys the sentiments which actuate the lord or lady, or master or mistress, of a great family to their servants.

First, Mrs. Modely, my lady's woman, had always thought Miss Walsingham, who as only an humble companion, when turned out of one place, could not perhaps get another, need not have been set above her, who would not turn her back on any one, in any thing about a lady; for her part she thought what it would come to; but as Miss was then stuck up at the first table, she would not now sit down at the second with a person who stopped all night with gentlemen.

My

My lord's valet thought her a devilish fine creature; but as he supposed Lady Gauntlet would not approve of it, he would not take any notice of her. On the credit of those high personages, then there was not a servant in the house who did not either turn up their noses or laugh out right, when our heroine was in their sight.

Rosa saw all this, without feeling the smallest resentment; she was conscious that her conduct did stand justly impeached, and resolved not to give the only explanation that could do away the imputations on her character, as that would lead to circumstances which must expose the child of her deceased friend, and by disclosing her name and situation, render the latent hope she fondly indulged, of seeing her the wife of her seducer, abortive.

The only thing in the behaviour of the servants that hurt her was, the impossibility of sending her packet to John through them; but as the out-door domestics might not yet have adopted the same conduct, or if they had, might be easier prevailed on to change it on certain conditions, she walked into the garden, and easily prevailed on an old labourer, who was employed to roll the lawn, to be her messenger to Denningcourt castle.

Having completed this important affair, she returned to her chamber; and, after dividing the presents of both her patronesses from her own clothes, and packing the latter in her portmanteau, and the other in a parcel, replaced Mrs. Woudbe's letters in the box, which, as the lock was broke, she fastened with tape, and having sealed it, without the smallest inclination to read another line of the "faithful and adoring Montreville's" writing, she carried it to Mrs. Woudbe's chamber, or rather her chamber door; for there Mrs. Jup her woman stood centry. Nobody could be admitted, she said, as her mistress was quite ill with the fright at Miss Walsingham's staying out all night; which, to be sure was a little oddish, though, as Mrs. Modely said, no more than might be expected.

Now this was little fib of Mrs. Jup's; for though Mrs Woudbe was certainly ill enough at ease, she was

able to receive and hold a long and interesting conversation with her friend Lady Gauntlet, who was at that precise moment deep in her trouble and counsels.

Rosa, however, returned to her chamber, desiring to be informed, when Mrs. Woudbe was disposed to see her.

As all further favours from Lady Gauntlet were as little expected as desired, and as she waited to dismiss herself from the place she was so ill qualified to fill, her thoughts naturally recurred to the mode of returning to London.

John had mentioned his being set down from the stage at Denningcourt; and as it was now probable she must be taken up at the same place, and that, instead of rolling thither, as she had twice done since her residence at Delworth-house, in a splendid equipage, she must be content to be carried there by her own freight limbs, she threw up the sash to trace with her eye the nearest way.

Denningcourt was situated on a small eminence, a few fields distant from the new jointure-house in Denningcourt park; and as the day was remarkably clear, she could distinctly see the path from Delworth woods, through the park, by the fine new house, to the village.

She then cast a tearful eye on the sombre grandeur of the old castle, where the guilty miserable Kattie wept over errors she had not resolution to forsake, and where every night she was entombed with her dead son. Sad were the reflections this thought gave rise to, and no less grievous than unavoidable was the stern necessity of withholding from the forlorn beauty, the comfort and relief of her society. The unconscious tear stood on her cheek when Mrs. Jup brought a note from Mrs. Woudbe, to decline seeing her on the score of ill health, but to say her woman would report any message she might choose to deliver.

Rosa chose to write; and Mrs. Jup not only carried a short note, but what was almost as welcome to Mrs. Woudbe as her casket of jewels could have been, the box of letters.

The dinner hour having passed without a summons to Rosa, or any notice taken of her billet to Mrs. Woudbe,

Woudbe, inclosing the balance of the fifty pounds received from her, after deducting what was due according to agreement, every moment's stay in a house where she was shunned by the family, and neglected by the domestics became more irksome than the last.

She had now as little confidence in the honour as in the humanity of her two patronesses; and, therefore as the arrangement of her journey from a place to which she was a stranger, would id all probability depend on herself, it struck her as the afternoon was fine, that, by walking to Denningcourt, she might learn every particular respecting the London stage, as well as reconnoitre the inn, where it was not unlikely she would be obliged to wait its passing; accordingly, having dressed herself in the black habit Mrs. Feversham called old and rusty, she left Mrs. Woudbe's "heaven."

She had scarce turned into the serpentine walk, before a maid servant overtook her with a letter. "Our folks are all so comical," said the girl, "that none of the men would carry your letter up, though it lay on the steward's table all day. Lord! as sure as death, there's Parson Brudenel and Lady Louisa! if they meet me, I shall lose my place."

Rosa, as little desirous of an interview with any of the family as the maid, turned into one path as she returned to the house by the other; and anxious to avoid notice, walked a considerable way before she observed the superscription of the letter was in the hand-writing of the now detestable "H. Montreville."

All her blood rushed to her face—the letter was thrown on the ground, and trod on; then recollecting that as it was addressed to her, however odious the contents, whoever picked it up would suppose it belonged to her;—no, she would tear it to atoms. In that moment the major's red coat, who, like other "home-keeping youths," passed his hours in "shapeless idleness," appearing through the foliage, suspended the fate of the unfortunate letter; she hastily put it in her pocket, and hurried on, till entering Denningcourt-park, she saw the village before her, and reflecting that she was again on the point of becoming an

helpless, unprotected wanderer, in a world where she might not find relation or friend, her mind became so sadly occupied, that she no longer thought of Mrs. Woudbe, or her letter.

CHAP. VII.

Proving that all the Lords and Ladies are not exactly alike; and shewing a new friend with an old face.

IT was not possible for any two ladies of the same rank to differ more than her, whose roof our heroine was preparing to abandon, and her, by whose charming residence the path led to Denningcourt village.

Inborn greatness might, indeed, be expected, in a superior degree, to preside in the soul of the latter, as she was the only remaining child of the Duke of Athelane, a nobleman, who inherited, from a long line of ancestry, the honour as well as title of his distinguished predecessors. The election of Lady Elinor, his lovely daughter would, it was reported, have been made in favour of a single life, had not the Duke, who never recovered the double loss of a beloved wife and amiable son, by a domestic calamity, prevailed on her to become Countess of Denningcourt, a short time previous to his death.

But although the misfortune that eventually deprived the young lady of both her parents, saddened the sweet expression of every feature in her mild countenance; though joy was banished from her heart, and love's inverted torch withered every blossom of delight in her bosom, her whole conduct was regulated by native honour, dignity of soul, and meek forbearance; no jarring atom formed a particle in her whole system;—she had not even the idea of malignity or ill humour; and never was sense so just and refined, adorned by a simplicity so artless and graceful:—her countenance bore the immediate mark of whatever sentiment

or motion her heart felt; and though the unobtrusive virtues and accomplishments, which endeared her to the good, and extorted respect from the bad, were often clouded by deep and pensive thought; though like the lone bird of night, she vented the plaints of her overcharged heart in solitude and melancholy; yet as her thoughts were innocent, her brow was serene, and she fulfilled every duty of a virtuous wife, and supported her high rank in society with the grace, ease, and hospitality peculiar to the noble stock from whence she descended; in short, in the words of the wisest of men, "her ways were the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths were peace;" and that "the heart of her husband did safely trust her," was proved by the disposition of his fortune, a short time before his death.

Lord Denningcourt was a widower at the time he became enamoured of Lady Elinor Athelane. His first lady was rich and well born; two qualities that, in the opinion of his parents whose choice she was, atoned for the deficiencies, mental and external, his lordship so eminently possessed in his second Countess, and which, indeed, he had so sensibly felt the absence of, that, determining to let his only son, a youth of great promise, be the carver of his own happiness, he gave him a settled and liberal establishment before he attained his eighteenth year.

Lord Vallerton's prudence did not keep pace with his father's generosity; he fell into the common error of young men who have too much of every thing;—his friends were all of a contrary description,—they had too little. He had an established governor of such strict morals, that both my lord and his governor happening to cast the eye of desire on the same damsel, a challenge ensued, and the event might have been fatal, had not another pretty damsel started up, and so attracted one or other of the heroes, that peace was established. My lord hated cards, but as it was the fashion for young men of rank to play and to lose, he did both;—he was naturally sober, and vastly averse to morning head-ache, but his companions had no pleasure equal to "drinking like the devil,"—so my

lord was never sober :—his taste was not only for modest but delicate women ; but his income was saddled with annuities to those whose favours he shared with half the town : he was just in principle ; but there were so many imperceptible ways of getting deeply in debt, that by the time his lordship came of age, he was a distressed man,—and those distresses coming to the ears of the Earl, he was sent for, heard a grave lecture on his thoughtless extravagance, which concluded with directions to send the aggregate of his debts to the steward, in order to their being immediately discharged.

My lord knew very little of the matter ; but his valet, who received and paid all for him, was very competent to the business ; and when the indulgent father gave a check on his banker for twenty-two thousand pounds to clear old debts, my lord, his valet and friends, had the world before them, with fresh credit to begin anew.

Lord Vallerton was now at the head of every thing he did not like,—and out of the way of every thing he did. Lord Aron Horsenagogg, some years indeed older than his lordship, but no less his particular friend, enlarged with wonderful eloquence on the delights of the turf—that Lord Vallerton had not yet tried—but he languished for something new—and his friend sold him such horses for the Newmarket-meetings, as, he swore, could never lose a race ;—but such as, it was proved, could never win one : and, in four years, the Earl of Denningcourt was again informed of his son's distresses, and again after a lecture, they were relieved, to the amount of forty-seven thousand pounds :—the lecture, however, was no longer on the thoughtless extravagance of youth ; its subject was dishonourable and profligate pursuits, and the scandal which rested on the character of a man of honour who assorted with, and became the prey of sharpers, however high the rank such men disgraced ; and who, unhappily insensible to the enchantment of female virtue, was, in the very moment of voluptuousness, but the slave of those slaves to many, who were ready to sacrifice him to the next comer.

Lord

Lord Vallerton blushed,—he felt the truth of all his father said; he could not deny there were friends, in whom there was no honour; and women, in whom there was no faith; all his lordship contended for was, an exception in favour of *his* friends and *his* women; as that exception, however, was precisely the one the Earl was least disposed to grant, the conference did not end quite cordially; but as the debts were paid, that ceased to be of importance.

From this time the Earl was more attentive to his son's mode of life; and although his heart did the fullest justice to the charms of Lady Denningcourt, he could not help acknowledging that the system of governing children as practised by his own parents, even to the joining them unsuitably in wedlock, was less dangerous than that he had himself adopted; but it was in vain he now endeavoured to repair his error, by resuming the authority he had resigned; the reproaches and threats, which resulted from his acquaintance with the prodigality of his son, were liberties *one gentleman* had no right to take with *another*; so, at least, thought Lord Vallerton, and the friends he consulted:—there was, of course, no submission on one side; no concessions on the other; the son was again distressed, and the father irascible;—but he once more paid the debts, and solemnly abjured the offender for ever.

It was indeed time for the Earl to be either angry or prudent; he had paid upwards of an hundred thousand pounds for his son, besides an allowance of two thousand pounds a year; and as his personal property was principally that which he received with his last lady, and having always lived in an expensive magnificent style, he must else soon have been a distressed man himself;—it happening, about this time, that the Countess was in an ill state of health, he retired with her to his castle, where he gratified his resentment against his son, by cutting down all the timber, breaking entails, and, finally, devising every shilling of property in his power, to the Countess.

The castle and a small heritable estate, being unalienable, he new-built the jointure-house, and was employed in decorating and furnishing it, purposing to remove

remove

remove every thing, but the actual heir-looms, from the ancient residence of the family, when he was seized with a fit of the gout, to which he was subject, and expired in six hours.

Lady Denningcourt possessed the confidence of her lord when living, as entire as his fortune when dead; he left her wholly unrestrained in her future conduct, except in regard to his son,—to whom he absolutely forbid her, as she respected his memory, to give up any part of the property he devised to her, not even at her death, except he should be then married, and, by having become a father himself, learned how to appreciate the parental indulgence he had so much abused:—his lordship had also verbally requested her to make the house, which he had been so anxious to compleat, her principal residence during her life.

The young Earl's conduct, when, after the removal of the Countess from the castle, he took possession of that and the small demesne which devolved to him, was ill calculated to conciliate the favour of the dowager, since, to the scandal of the neighbourhood, he brought thither a mistress, who, judging of her as by his former connections, might very naturally be supposed to accompany him in the obscurity which his own ill conduct merited, in order to be “in at the death” of all his remaining property.

The old furniture and family plate were heir-looms of the castle; but all the modern ornaments were removed to the jointure-house which Rosa was now approaching.

There was a sublimity as well as grandeur, in the *tout ensemble* of this elegant building, that struck the beholder with admiration, and it was surrounded by such a coincidence of objects, that it might be well styled the mansion of peace:—it stood on a gentle eminence, but did not command so extensive and various a prospect as was seen from every part of Delworth-house.

The grand entrance to the best apartments was by a flight of steps, under a colonade, supported by lofty marble pillars; but there were in the suite of apartments beneath, comfort and convenience that rendered them

them favourites with the fair mistress of the mansion. The ceilings were not quite so lofty as the others, but the furniture and decorations equal, and the windows, all to the ground, opened to the park, from which nature's most lovely carpet in front, was only separated by a light chevaux de frise, with netting, to prevent the deer and a few favourite lambs, from injuring the fine flowers, which, in china vases, were arranged in front of the house, intermixed with a variety of birds of beautiful song and plumage.

The grand eating saloon, a breakfast, a music and billiard rooms; a ladies and a gentleman's library, with an elegant boudoir at each end, were at once visible to the eye of the passengers, who were allowed to go through the park.

Rosa gazed not only at the beautiful apartments, as she passed them, but at the happy beings, for so she thought they must be, who inhabited them; and though good manners might rather be said to be a part of her natural disposition, than an acquirement from education, she could not help stopping to indulge a sensation, that had something more affecting in it than mere curiosity, while observing a lady who was reading in the boudoir, and who presently left it with her book in her hand; Rosa dropped a low involuntary courtsey, though conscious of its not being observed.

The lady stopped a moment, as she passed the library, speaking to a gentleman who was writing there, in an accent so mild and harmonious, as vibrated on the ear of attention, and then went on, Rosa slowly following, the chevaux de frise only dividing her from the object of her admiration, who again stopped at the second library, where three ladies were assembled, one of whom was tuning her harp, a second drawing, and the third netting.

The lady again stopped, and entered into a short conversation with the group, whose smiling countenances announced the ease of their hearts, while Rosa, fearful of giving offence, passed slowly on.

Deeply sighing, as she proceeded, every new object adding to her admiration; "Oh!" cried she, "had heaven ordained such an asylum for me!—all here
must

must be purity and benevolence,—for here dwelt the respectable foundress of those monuments of urbanity, now full in her view, as explained by Lady Gauntlet.”

The lady, who had left her friends, and proceeded with a quickened pace toward the further boudoir, again stopped, and the silver tones of her still harmonious, but more dulcet voice, was addressed, in soothing accents, to those within;—she seemed to sooth, —she strove to comfort; her efforts, not succeeding, became more faint,—she turned, weeping, from the boudoir into an orangery, which adjoined it.

“Alas!” cried Rosa, “how impossible is it to judge of this strange world! here, in the bosom of tranquillity, the tear of anguish is seen to flow,—even that interesting woman is not exempt from sorrow.”

Coming now to the front of the boudoir, she beheld a female figure, apparently young, reclining her head on a pillow which an elderly woman supported; a greyhound lay at her feet, and her eyes were fixed on the ground, totally inattentive to the endeavours of two women to amuse her, though they dressed a lamb in a fantastical manner with flowers, for that purpose.

What did not Rosa feel at that moment! why did her bosom swell! why did her tears flow! she could not envy a being who, visited by sickness or misfortune, beheld the enchanting scene that so affected her, with apathy.

Envy was a stranger to the bosom of the Beggar: a sensation of tenderness overwhelmed her:—this was, perhaps, the daughter, the sister, the friend of the good and charitable Lady Denningcourt; for her, she persuaded herself, it was she had seen. Oh! how precious the tears of such a woman! she who administered comfort to age; who gave to sickness a bed of ease,—to infancy an asylum:—Oh how soothing must her sympathy be; how more than happy those to whom it was extended; even the menial domestics of Lady Denningcourt, must feel the blessings of her good acts, dropping like manna from heaven! blessings, alas! which she could never hope to share.

She

She had now passed the house ; her low spirits were accompanied by a nervous irritability ; and though it was only the greyhound that left the boudoir, leaped the chevaux de frise and ran after her, she was frightened and fell.

Her scream reached the three ladies and the gentleman, who all hastened through a low green gate, almost hid by trees, to her assistance, and were, no doubt, astonished to see a beautiful young woman in a *rusty black* riding habit, almost senseless on the ground, with the greyhound jumping on her, and licking her hands and face.

"Dido, Dido, here, here, Dido," cried a female voice.

Rosa started up,—she was seized with a nervous affection ; she shrieked, wept, caressed the dog, and pressed him to her heart.

"Dido, Dido," again cried the woman. "Dido, Dido," was repeated in a weaker voice.

Rosa shrieked ; the persons calling Dido approached ; but Dido's name no longer reverberated from the abode of tranquillity, nor was it the alternate screams and sobs of Rosa that was now heard.

The young person, at whose feet the greyhound lay, had, with one of her attendants, anxiously pursued him : the creature was infinitely dear to her—she followed it ; and the moment she saw Rosa, her shrieks rent the air.

The gentleman was alarmed—the ladies terrified ; at length changing shrieks to deep and hollow groans, "Rosa ! my Rosa ! my dear own, own Rosa, ah ! how I have longed for this !" sounded from her bloodless lips ; and our heroine found the emaciated form of the once happy and ever dear Elinor in her arms.

"The goodness of goodness have mercy upon me," cried her attendant, the loquacious Mrs. Betty Brown, if here be'nt my Miss fainted quite away, and the lost sheep found ! How do you do, Mistress Rosa ? what, don't you know me ? I think, by your parrel, you need not be very proud ; for my part, I should be ashamed to appear in our Stuart's room in such a shabby-genteel dress."

The

The Duke of Athelane, whom Rosa saw in the library, sent another of Elinor's women for a gentleman of the faculty, who, with a very liberal salary, was retained in the house : he removed Elinor to the boudoir ; and as he insisted on every person's retiring, an elderly woman who under his directions constantly watched her excepted, the duke invited Rosa into the room the ladies had left.

Had every being Rosa ever knew, not excepting Mr. Montreville, been present, she would have had neither eyes, ears, nor a thought to bestow on any but Elinor : she entreated, in the most earnest and passionate terms, permission to attend her dear friend, her companion, the sister of her heart.

" You hear, me'm," said one of the ladies, " the doctor interdicts all company."

" The doctor," replied Rosa, her eyes bathed in tears, " knows not how dear we are to each other. My poor Elinor ! her mind, I know, is is not changed with her person."

" That is, indeed, changed," said the duke, in an accent of pity.

" I think, me'm," said the same lady, " we have seen you before."

Rosa now looked round ; and, to her unspeakable astonishment beheld Lady Hopely and the two ladies she chaproned at Mrs. Woudbe's masked-ball, whose recollection of her were far less favourable than hers of them ; but though the satirical glance of Miss Bruce, as she spoke, might, in other circumstances have confounded Rosa, she was at this moment so much interested, and so anxious to obtain permission to see Elinor, that, forgetting the coldness of the amiable Countess, to whom she was so much obliged, the last and only time she had seen her in London, and remembering only her kindness at Edinburgh, she instantly addressed her, imploring her to obtain, from the friends of the poor invalid, permission for her to be admitted to her.

Lady Hopely was moved by her tears ; but the peculiar circumstance under which she had first known her, and the suspicious ones in which they had since met,

met, as well as the delicate situation of the young lady, repelled her natural wish to dispense happiness; she was therefore silent, and Miss Bruce returned to the attack.

"You don't say, me'm, whether I am mistaken;—I think you live with that amiable woman, Mrs. Woudbe?"

Rosa bowed.

"Yes, I think you was her double at the masked-ball. Upon my honour, I thought you had great merit there;—it was a post of some danger, as well as fatigue."

A wedding, a presentation, a new fashion, and an elopement, are subjects that interest most young women of fashion. Miss Angus, as lively as Miss Bruce, and far more good-natured, could not help joining the conversation.

"You are going, we hear, to have a grand wedding at Delworth?"

Rosa, who had been seated by the Duke, again bowed.

"A ball *al fresco*," continued Miss Angus.

"Oh, yes!" rejoined Miss Bruce—"quite a famous thing! you will have a great number of visitants in *masks*, I fancy;—you are not much fatigued with bare faces in this country."

"I wonder," said Miss Angus, "how that model, of every thing extraordinary, Lady Gauntlet, can exist in such a solitude?"

"You, me'm," cried Miss Bruce, with a broad stare from her dull insipid eye, "are, however, amused vastly well, I dare say;—Lord Delworth is very gallant, and the major quite the thing."

"So fully and so well employed," joined Lady Hopely, rising, "you would have very little time to spare for our poor invalid, notwithstanding she was, as we understand, your school companion."

Her ladyship immediately quitted the apartment as she uttered the last word, followed by the Duke.

"Pray, me'm," and Miss Bruce politely turned her back as she spoke, "where was it you had the good fortune to be school-mate with Miss Athelane?"

"Miss

"Miss Athelane!" repeated Rosa. But the letter she had received from Elinor immediately recurring to her memory, and with it the several circumstances of her removal from Doctor Croak's, she concluded that either Lady Denningcourt or one of her friends was the relation under whose protection Elinor now was; she also, in that instant, remembered the particular injunction of her friend, not to let the name of Buhanun escape her; and fear, lest Lady Hopely might mention her connection with the major's family, blunted every shaft from the malignity of Miss Bruce, to whose mercy she was now left, as Miss Angus was sent for by the Duke.

"What are you surprised at?" continued Miss Bruce;—"but perhaps you did not know her by the name of Athelane? I suppose—" and she eyed the rusty black habit with as scrutinizing a glance as Betty herself could have done—"I suppose either your friend has risen, or you fallen very considerably, since you were school companions;—but I should like to know what fine seminary qualified you for a place in Mrs. Woudbe's family arrangements!"

Poor Miss Bruce had as good a disposition to abuse Miss Athelane, as to mortify our heroine;—perhaps, indeed, had she not been restrained by certain private considerations, the former might have predominated, since, in her, a new rival had started out of the lap of mystery, more dangerous than she once thought Kattie Buhanun, as the Duke made no secret of his wish to unite his nephew, Mr. Angus, to this new-found favourite, whereas the latter could not have provoked her malignant satire by any thing but her extraordinary beauty.

Rosa blushed deeply: she had, in the recent discovery of Mrs. Woudbe's character, a solution of the disesteem in which that intriguing matron was held; and the proof that Lady Gauntlet was privy to her abandoned conduct, also suggested, that the dearth of company at Delworth, and of private visitors in Portman-square, resulted from the same cause.

But, besides that, she was in the moment racking her invention for means to prevent Lady Hopely from
com-

communicating circumstances poor Elinor had been so anxious to conceal ; there was the appearance of such sapience of understanding, blended with the spiteful and unprovoked ill humour of Miss Bruce, that, considering “ the blindness of the understanding, as much to be pitied as the blindness of the eye ; that there is neither jest nor guilt in the person who loses their way in either,” she rather felt sorry for, than angry at her attacks.

But as she was as little disposed to vindicate as to expose Mrs. Woudbe, it was as difficult to answer the broad hints against her, without doing away the other, as at all to justify herself ; she therefore simply answered, that her acquaintance commenced with the young lady she had so accidentally met, at a boarding-school in the country, kept by one of the best of women ; whose——”

“ What, Harley !” interrupted Miss Bruce, “ or some such name ? she who is always teasing us with letters, and who, indeed, appears to me to be as mad as her pupil.”

“ Mad !” repeated Rosa, with emotion ; “ I hope, madam, I have no marks of insanity ?”

“ You ! no, no ; and yet, now I recollect, what the deuce did you mean by hugging the old greyhound ?—the odious thing is quite a nuisance ; and I have often wondered Lady Denningcourt would humour her niece by keeping it—it has hardly strength to crawl ;—nothing can be a stronger proof of the derangement of her little senses than fondness for such an animal.”

“ Ah, madam !” cried Rosa, with pale and breathless anxiety, “ what do you say ? deranged ! has such a calamity befallen my dear Elinor ?”

“ It certainly has,” replied the unfeeling Miss Bruce, and shrugging her shoulders,—“ yet, notwithstanding that, we want to make a duchess of her—but it won’t do ; the girl is well enough ; they cry up her innocence, sweet temper, and all that—but it won’t do ; there are people in the world on whom polished metal of inferior value will pass better than rough gold—and Angus is one of them ;—besides, to
suppose

suppose such a charming fellow as that will ever marry a maniac, is a famous joke, even if he were weary of the forward, bold thing he keeps."

Miss Bruce always spoke before she began thinking; and no young lady from the north of Tweed could say more nothings in a given time than herself.

The subject she had now entered on, was an everlasting one; it was Mr. Angus and the dukedom.

Rosa eagerly listened: she no longer thought of restraining Lady Hopely's communications.

The part of Miss Bruce's conversation, which she comprehended was interesting in the highest degree. Miss Bruce was proceeding, when she also was sent for; and the servant had but just closed one door after her, before Mrs. Brown entered at another.

Rosa arose with alacrity; she now saw before her the person whose care and professions of kindness had left a lasting impression on her heart, and to whom she had given credit for integrity and good meanings, enough to excuse the weakness and often folly of her conduct; her white arms were expanded ready to encircle the neck on which, in childhood, she had often hung; but the heart that never shared in her caresses, further than interest led, was now absent, from the same motives.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rosa?" said she, with an air of the most settled composure, and seating herself, nodded to a chair.

Rosa first stared in astonishment, and then, notwithstanding the aching solicitude she felt for Elinor, could not help laughing at the state of the expecting, my lady duchess's woman.

"I am glad to see you so merry, Mrs. Rosa," said Betty;—"your dress is so shabby, (and she drew a pink belt, which fastened her fine muslin gown, tighter) that really I thought what was bred in the bone would never get out of the flesh;—to be sure, ashes to ashes, and dirt to dirt, all the world over; but then, as you have had such good learning, why a body should think as you mought get a liven; for as I told you in my letter, when land and money is gone and spent, then learning is most excellent;—but howsoever, as I say,
every

every body is not born with silver spoons in their mouths ; and though I wifit at Lord Gauntlet's, I am fure the least of my thoughts was to find you there along with that lady, as Mrs. Modeley, and ſhe is our Stuart's couſin, ſes is'nt a lady born ;—though ſhe do give grand balls, where our young ladies went when we was in London——”

“ Betty, my dear Betty,” interrupted Roſa—

“ Mrs. Brown, if you pleaſe, Mrs. Roſa ; and I aſſure you, every body uſed to call me ſo when I kept a houſe of my own, only that poor ignorant man, my huſbent, would always let you call me Betty, becauſe, poor ſappy Tony, he ſaid, as we wus no better, nor wus then ſarvents to his maſter ; but the caſe is quite altered, for now I never wets my fingers ; and pleaſe God, I ſhall have good fortune ; for a gypſey——”

“ Dear, Mrs. Brown, do answer me,” ſaid Roſa ; —“ I don't aſk if Lady Denningcourt be the lady who took my Elinor from Doctor Croak's—that I underſtand ; but only tell me how long ſhe has been ill, and what is her malady ?”

“ Oh, Lord, Miſs !—Mrs. Roſa I mean,” and Betty having carefully examined whether there were any liſteners near the keyhole of the doors, ſhut them—
“ have not you heard ? why ſhe is mad !”

“ Oh, God in his mercy forbid !” and Roſa's pale cheeks, accorded with the exclamation.

“ True as you are alive, Miſs—Mrs. Roſa—as mad as a March hare ;—and here we have got a mad doctor and a mad nuſs. Poor dear ! ſhe is ſo glad when the old woman, juſt for a moment, leaves her and me together.”

“ Oh, dear girl ! I can divine the fatal cauſe.”

“ Not you indeed, Mrs. Roſa—not if you had ſeven years, and ſeven to that : I am ſure I never inſpected it myſelf ; and ſo I told his Grace, upon my bended knees, when he found it out.”

“ And what did his Grace find out ?”

“ Why, Miſs, he found out as that ragamuffin feller, Jack Croak, got our ſtuart, a very well-ſpoken, portly man he is, to hire him for a footman ; and at laſt, I knoed no more of it than the man in the moon, he got
Miſs

Miss Elinor away in a postchaise; and, by God's mercy, the Duke had been to his castle in Scotland—a fine place our Stuart says it is; and as he was coming back to my lady, who should he meet but Jack Croak and Miss;—well, I never shall forget it the longest day I have to live, when I went to get her up in the morning; there was the nest, but the bird was flown,—and I trembled like a naspen leaf when I went to tell my lady;—and oh, dear, dear, what a house we had. My lady did nothen but wring her hands, and say her prayers. Ah, Miss—Mrs. I should say—you may well cry; for, to be sure, my suffrens was great—I expected every minute to be turned out of door.”

Though Betty had not betrayed the smallest mark of sensibility at meeting with Rosa, she did not want sympathy in certain cases.

Rosa wept for Elinor—Betty for herself.

“ Ah!” cried Rosa, “ I foreboded.”

“ You mean, Mrs. Rosa, you afterboded it, I suppose,—and after-wits is poor stuff; for I defy Satan himself to have inspected such a thing—as Jack Croak's being at our house, one of our footmen, and me not find him out;—though, indeed, except our own footman in the Stuart's room, we ladies' women never speak to them inferior servants, much less to inspect, as Miss Elinor would go for to make a napkin of a duster;—and then, as our butler said, when I told him as Jack stole money from his father's servant, ‘ why, says he, 'tis a wonder I have got all my plate;’—and so it was, Miss—don't you think so?”

“ Not exactly; but pray go on:—the Duke met them, you say, and knew?”

“ He knew Miss Elinor at first glance, just as they passed the gate at that place where the smith lives as marries all the folks; but then, that fool Jack might have got away as easy as a glove, and his Grace would have known nothing about him; but there he hung to the wheels of the carriage and cried; and when the groom dragged him away, throed himself on the ground, and then Mr. Maclane, the Duke's gentleman, remembered him.”

“ Poor fellow!”

“ Lord!

"Lord! Mistress Rosa, how can you pity such a scapegrace, as had like to turn me out of my place; I am sure hanging is too good for him. However, back they brought poor Miss Elinor, more like a ghost nor a christian; and my lady, stead of flying out as Madam Bawky would have done, was as meek as a lamb; and, stead of scolding, axed Miss Elinor's pardon for letting her live so long with Doctor Croak."

"Amiable, respectable Lady Denningcourt!"

"You may well say that, Mistress Rosa; for God knows, she is fit for nothen but the kingdom of heaven;—high and low, rich and poor—'tis all one; every body loves her, and she can't shew her nose in the village, but what folk are ready to throw her down with blessings; but, however, to make short of the story, Jack was sent—I don't know where he was sent; but if ever he comes here again, I believe old Croak will pay off all scores. Lord, Mistress Rosa, only think what long scores I got owed to me at Penry—a poor, mean place, now—would you believe?"

"But how did Elinor bear—"

"Bear! why I told you before, she could not bear—she run mad;—first, she neither eat nor drank—and then she never spoke, and at last she stared and stormed; I was afraid to go near her. My lady took her to London, and then to the great Doctor that cures every body; and they all wanted her to let Miss stop with them—and that would have been a sad thing; for then, you know, Miss, I must have lost my place; but my lady said, no, she would never part with her."

"Oh, Mrs. Brown! what would I not give to be as happy as you!"

"Way, to be sure, Miss, I wants for nothing;—and if I could but hear for sartain that poor John Brown was laid in his peaceful grave, why (and Mrs. Brown bridled) I might be very comfortable; for our Stuart is worth a power of money, and he——"

"Heavens, Betty! what are you saying? have you lost both your senses and your principles?"

"Lord, Mistress Rosa! no—I tell you it is poor Miss Elinor who have lost her senses. So, then, you see, when my lady found as all the doctors could do,
only

only cured her of her obstreperousness, and left her as moping and melancholly as a cat, she hired a doctor and a nurse—a poor, fat, lazy, old creature as ever lived—to come down here; but, poor soul, she is fell away to a skeleton; and now, after poor Dido—you remember old Dido, Miss Rosy?”

Mrs. Brown was now imperceptibly changing the Mistress Rosa to Miss Rosy.

“Remember her! yes, my dear Betty;—now you call me Rosy, I may again call you Betty; and I remember Mr. John Brown, good John Brown, your husband—he is worth a thousand stewards;—sure you would be glad to see him.”

“Not I, Miss Rosy—not I, I assure you; for, poor man, you know Miss, he is certainly dead, and I don’t want no acquaintance with any body after they are corpses; besides, our Stuart——But pray, Miss, how came you to leave that major’s lady? I suppose you was too stomachful to wait on her after the gentleman died; but that was all frippery nonsense; for, you see, though I kept a house of my own——oh, gemonigig! there’s my bell, and I must run. However, Mistress Rosa, if you pass this way again, and come round to tother front, ring the Stuart’s bell, and ask for me—for Mrs. Brown—and you will be made as welcome as flowers in May. Oh, Lord! there’s the bell again.”

“Betty, Betty, stay one moment;—can’t I see Elinor?”

“Oh dear! I don’t know—there’s the bell again—and that old nurse owes me a grudge—I must be gone;”—and away ran Mrs. Brown.

Rosa was again alone—her heart now palpitating with hope she would be allowed to see the dear afflicted girl, for whom she had so sincere and ardent an affection, and now sinking with fear at she knew not what, besides the possibility that she might be banished this terrestrial Eden, and never more behold her Elinor. It was full half an hour before she heard a foot stir; at length the door was thrown open by a servant, and the Duke of Athelane entered.

C H A P. VIII.

“ At length Sancho said to his master, Please, Sir, to ask Mr. Ape, whether the affair of the cave be true? for, begging your worship’s pardon, I don’t believe a word of it.

“ The monkey being accordingly consulted, the answer was, that *part* was true, and *part* false.”

THE Duke of Athelane was neither young nor handsome; but he was, what is superior to either, sensible and well-informed: his air was grand, his countenance open, and his demeanour courteous; he was not ashamed of being a slave to honour, though he had power to seal the lip of censure; and tho’ independent in his spirit and fortune, had not learned, by a contempt of fame, to despise virtue. He united the two opposite characters of courtier and patriot, in a manner that secured the respect of the sovereign, and the love of the people; men of sense were proud to quote his opinion—men of honour to follow his example.

He succeeded his brother to the ducal honours and estate, in default of male issue; and never having been married, had, by agreement between the late duke and himself, at a great expence, both of money and interest, procured a grant from the crown for the title to pass, with the estate, to Mr. Angus, son of his sister, the only male descendant of the elder branch of the ancient family of the Athelanes.

Lady Denningcourt was endeared to him, by her beauty, her virtues, and her early and almost unprecedented misfortunes; and it may be no digression here to acknowledge, that Elinor’s surmise was just: It was by a maternal right she was claimed from Doctor Croak.

Lady Elinor Athelane was the essence of harmony in body and soul: her brother inherited from his race all the indignant sense of honour which distinguished the brave Scotch chieftains, when, impatient of delay, they seized the power of avenging their own wrong,

without waiting the tardy executioner of the law. Noble he was, and noble were his fires: he was the pride of his country, the honour of his family, and the champion of the injured wherever he met them—a terrible foe, a faithful and unwearied friend. My son, said his father, in delivering his own sentiments, thinks so or so; my son, said the fond exulting mother, acts thus, or thus; my brother, said the dove-like sister, —oh! if ever I love, it must be a man like my brother.

And such a man there was.

A youth of her mother's clan was the chosen companion of the Marquis of Dungaron: their spirits were congenial; their forms eminently fine; their features handsome; and their manners naturally elegant: their tastes, pursuits, and amusements, were the same; till the power which conquers all, broke the sweet bond of amity, and blasted every bud of hope.

Lady Elinor, who, with her mother, had resided the last three years in the south, for the benefit of masters superior to those to be procured in the north, at one glance, decided the destiny of the two friends. —Unconscious of the fatal consequences of that passion which, even according to holy writ, "is as strong as death, which many waters cannot quench, nor floods drown," indulging the sweet bent of her gentle disposition to confer happiness, she thought not of the precipice on which she stood, nor doubted the honour of him whose soul was dear as her own.

The youth had no inheritance but the sword of his ancestors, unstained by an act of dishonour: Lady Elinor's fortune would be immense; and she was betrothed by her father to an English peer of the first rank. Poor Elinor! this was a fatal bar to her lover's hope, of which she never thought, while the graceful youth knelt at her feet, impressed burning kisses on her hand, and washed them with his tears, till the Duke tore the soft bandage from their eyes, by informing them of what reason, had they not been too much in love to attend to her dictates, might have told them long before, that, however congenial their minds,

acres

acres of land and thousands of guineas, formed an impassable mountain to obstruct their union.

The lover's genius was high, his soul daring, and his love unconquerable; but he was poor, and could not dare ask one of the first and richest dukes in Scotland to forego his promise, and break his sacred word in favour of an indigent relation.

Elinor, who was as mild as diffident, and as dutiful as fond, fainted away when the duke spoke of the honourable alliance he had formed for her: he attributed her emotion to the excessive delicacy of her mind, and was too much satisfied with the treaty to observe its effect on the companion of his son. The future settlement of the young pair had brought on an intimacy between the marquis and the daughter of the same family; he also became passionately enamoured; his parents approved; his heart bounded with transport; and his impatience to hasten the two-fold nuptials, could be only equalled by the torturing anxiety of the fair Elinor to avoid it.

The young man, who could not conceal and who dared not avow his passion, prevailed on his father to command his absence from Athelane for a short time: this was acceded to with reluctance; and he set off, not to enter his paternal home, but to hide in the caverns on the Athelane estate, which had formerly received bands of warriors, there to watch the footsteps of the wretched Elinor, to woo her to his retreats, to assail her with all the tenderness of a first passion, and all the frenzy of deep despair.

The English lover at length visited Athelane: he was received with hospitable splendour; he sat at the right-hand of the duchess, and was attended to with the nicest respect by the duke, and the most friendly warmth by the marquis; but the lovely daughter, pale, and cold as marble, partook neither of the joy of her friends, nor the rapture of her admirer.

Lord Cheltenham felt all the desire, but none of the sensibilities of true love; he was handsome and accomplished, nor was he by any means insensible of his own merit; he could not believe the cold reception he received from Lady Elinor was, as the duchess hinted,

the mere effect of delicacy, and became first suspicious, then watchful; Lady Elinor was neither; her secret interviews with the beloved cousin were therefore soon betrayed.

Lord Cheltenham's wounded pride and disappointed passion, were not to be appeased with any thing less than exposure of the woman who could prefer an indigent relation to a coronet; he led the noble open-hearted Dungaron to a cavern, the entrance to which was shaded by thick underwood, and blasted every youthful hope, by coldly and scornfully pointing to Lady Elinor enjoying that repose in her lover's arms, which she courted in vain on her pillow.

"For this," said Lord Cheltenham, "was I invited to Athelane? and was I, but for this fortunate discovery, destined to marry a wanton? But think not, my Lord Marquis, Lady Almeria Cheltenham will ally herself to dishonour—here must our family treaty end—patch up the affair as you please—except to my sister, the disgrace shall rest with me."

There needed not the goad of disappointed love to urge the Marquis of Dungaron's rage, at a sight so appalling to honour and friendship; the sister he adored, the friend he loved, confederates in the dishonour of his name, and the ruin of his peace.

"Wretch! villain!" he cried, flying on them like an hungry lion on his prey, and twisting his ruthless hand in the golden tresses of the gentle, terrified Lady Elinor, he dragged her from the encircling arms of his once favoured friend.

"She is my wife! my lord!" said he.

"Die, traitor! hypocrite! and, with the base lie in thy throat, face the God of truth."

The marquis had now seized on the unarmed youth with one hand, and drew his dirk with the other.

The frantic Elinor rushed before its point. "Ah, my brother!" said she, tears streaming from her mild eyes, "what would you do? will Athelane's heir become an assassin!"

The furious marquis spurned her from him; and glancing in that fatal moment his furious eyes round
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the cavern, saw a pair of pistols lying on a projecting stone, brought there by the unhappy lover.

The marquis seized them with implacable rage. "Coward! scoundrel! lurking, mean villain!" What was it of raging passion he did not utter!

Lady Elinor again knelt at his feet; again he spurned her.

"If," cried the marquis, foaming with rage, and offering one of the pistols, "thou dare face thy injured friend, and ill-requited benefactor——"

"Oh, for mercy! my brother, my dear brother!" and Lady Elinor once more prostrated herself.

In his attempt to raise her, the lover accidentally fell himself; and in that situation received a personal insult too degrading for manhood. Forbearance was no more—the pistol was accepted and discharged—the combatants both fell, and Elinor's shrieks rent the air.

The woodmen heard her—the family were alarmed—the duke and duchess flew to the spot. Unhappy parents! their pride, their hope, their only son, was expiring; he could only articulate enough to charge himself with all the blame of the fatal deed, before he breathed his last on the bosom that gave him birth. The bleeding body of his opponent was not suffered to enter the castle; it was carried to a neighbouring cottage, where his father, to whose more humble heart he was not less dear than the Marquis of Dungaron to his, arrived the same evening; and being considered as an accessory with his son, was obliged to accept the assistance of the friends of his own clan, to escape by sea the revenge vowed against him by the more powerful clan of Athelane; and in a fishing-vessel, brought as near as the coast would admit, he, with two faithful adherents, reached the coast of France, carrying with him his wounded and almost lifeless son.

The duchess never spoke after her son expired; and the duke, unable to support himself under such a double calamity, was reduced to the last extremity. The coffins of his adored wife and beloved son were, by his order, though soldered up, kept in state to wait for his own; and the castle resembled more a recep-

tacle for the dead than the seat of magnificent hospitality.

In the general wreck, Elinor, the gentle tender delicate Elinor, only retained fortitude and strength to watch every turn in the duke's disorder; but the price of his pardon was an oath never to behold the murderer of a mother, whose virtue adorned her high rank; of a son, who was the hope of his country.

Life would have been a poor sacrifice, in the dutiful Elinor's estimation, to procure the pardon and peace of her now only parent; but a tie more dear than life bound her to the wretched exile.

According to the laws of Scotland, which do not require a church ceremony to validate a marriage, or legitimate the offspring of an acknowledged union, Lady Elinor was, in her own estimation, a wife, and knew she would also be a mother.

She prostrated herself before her father, and hiding her face, made the avowal, which had nearly been as fatal to him, as his son's death to her mother.

Some estates and great personals were vested in Lady Elinor and her issue, on the demise of the marquis without heir; and the idea that the destroyer of his son, or any of his race, should benefit by the calamity he had caused, threw him into agonies, in which it was feared he would expire: he became delirious, heaping curses on his lovely daughter, and calling down the vengeance of heaven on the murderer of his son.

Such was the miserable state of the Athelane family, when news, on unquestionable authority, was brought to the castle, that the unfortunate offender had swallowed poison.

Groaning under the heavy weight of a father's curse, which she could not deprecate without staining her soul with deeper guilt, without abjuring a husband more unfortunate than criminal, and depriving the unborn of its native rights; the unburied body of her dear loved mother, brought, broken-hearted, to an untimely end; the handsome, noble Malcolm, ever mourned, and ever before her; every feeling of her soul lacerated with hopeless grief, Lady Elinor was
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the less shocked at the deplorable end of him who was the cause of all, as it removed the grand obstacle to her father's retracting his malediction.—She could dare to rush into his presence, press his burning hand to her trembling lips, wash it with tears of penitence, and call heaven and all the host of angels to witness the unlimited obedience she would in future pay her dear father, if heaven, in compassion to her miseries, would spare him to bless and protect her.

Her piety, her penitence, and prayers, were accepted: The duke lived to bless and forgive her; he led her in sad procession to attend his noble wife and son, when carried in funeral pomp to the mausoleum of his ancestors, and there heard her vow of unlimited obedience repeated, amid the sighs and tears of all the House of Athelane.

After the last obsequies, he immediately left his castle; and determining the child, of which his daughter was pregnant, should, from its birth, be an alien to his family, country and fortune, set off, by easy stages, to England, from whence he intimated his intention to go abroad.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, the person who attended the late duchess during her confinements, both as nurse and midwife, was his only confidant in the affair he had so much at heart; the bond on her secrecy was her attachment to his family; the reward of it an annuity for life; and having been sent privately to the south some days before he left Athelane, she had already succeeded in her mission, which was to take a ready-furnished house, within a certain distance of London, and hire two English female domestics, ready to receive Lady Elinor, before they reached the metropolis.

So far Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin was in the duke's secret: She met him at Hatfield, whence, leaving his carriages and attendants to proceed to London, a hack chaise carried them across the country, to a small, lone house within three miles of Penny, where he reminded his daughter of her vow of obedience, and informed her she was to remain till able to leave England.

Lady Elinor understood the cruel policy which was intended to rob her child of its birth-right; but always gentle and complying, as it was her nature to be, she was now too timid and broken-spirited ever to remonstrate; she knew her father's humanity, his pride, and generosity; he could not, consistent with either, abandon his own blood; and depending on a return of the fond indulgence which was now rather suspended than lost, she acquiesced, in hope that time, when it restored her father to himself, would also reunite her to her child; and when told that the favoured attendant of her dear mother was to be hers, she gratefully kissed the hand of her father, not without a secret hope that her child would also be committed to the same care.

With this good woman Lady Elinor might indulge in all the luxury of grief, free from the keen inquisition and reproachful glances of an offended and grieving parent, whose deep drawn sighs struck in daggers to her heart; with her she might dare to blend grief for a husband with lamentation for a mother and brother; and by her she was encouraged to hope, that her child would one day be the acknowledged heir of the Duke of Athelane; for Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin protested the marriage was good, and of course the offspring legitimate.

The Duke's visits were frequent and short, but always *incog.*; and as they were considered as a private family, they excited no curiosity in the neighbourhood.

The hatred borne by the duke to the name of him, from whom his son received his death-wound, was so far from being appeased by his self-destruction, that it swelled into irritation and revengeful ire, at the most distant probability of the fortune of his house descending to any of the detested race; and his unborn grandchild was, of course, abjured before its birth.

His scheme was to place it out of the knowledge of any part of his family; but, at the same time, where the handsome allowance he intended to make for it, should secure both justice and humanity. He had not yet met with any person in whom he chose to place a confidence

confidence which accorded with the dictates of his conscience, when, as Lady Elinor's time grew nigh, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin suggested the necessity of having an accoucheur ready to assist her in case of danger.

The Duke, after many oblique enquiries, heard of Doctor Croak, and, resolving that care for his daughter should not impede the grand point, rode through Penry, where under pretence of a gouty complaint, he called on the doctor, who, with his *chère amie*, Mrs. Bawsky, was taking tea with every appearance of domestic comfort; and it instantly struck the duke that this man might answer the double purpose of attending his daughter, and adopting her child; he accordingly asked some few leading questions, gave the doctor a guinea, and took his measures accordingly.

It was now necessary he should make another half-confident: his coachman, who had been brought up in the Athelane stables, was obliged, in obedience to the commands of the duke, to return to one of his early stations, and drive, as postillion, a plain hired chaise and hack horses.

Doctor Croak, elated by the acquisition of a fair boarder, so well inclined to forward his interest and welfare, was in a delightful dream of advancement in life, when the loud rapping at his gate, on which, unknown to himself, so many golden advantages depended, disturbed him, he answered from his window, and on being told a chaise waited to carry him to a lady in want of his assistance, he made all possible haste, and having taken every usual precaution to fence out the cold, hobbled through wind and rain to the chaise, into which he was no sooner entered, than a hood was thrown over his head by a person whose manual strength rendered all opposition vain.

The doctor's courage oozed out at all points, and he implored mercy in an accent that proved his terror.

"Be patient, Sir," said the person who held both the doctor and the hood, in a passive position, "no injury is intended you; you are really going to a lady, who may or may not want you;—you are the agent, but not the confident, of a secret that may make your fortune; you will have time to consider of a proposal

I am authorised to make: the child, who will soon be brought into the world, must never know the authors of its being:—Do you comprehend?”

“He—he—hem!—no, no, not quite—he—he—hem—clear!—he—he—hem.”

“A bank note of 500*l.* will be put into the hands of the person who relieves them of all anxiety on its account;—do you comprehend now?”

“Hem—hem! I—I think—I presume I do!”

“Very well, Sir;—if the child live a twelvemonth, five hundred guineas more will be remitted.—You are sure you understand.”

“Oh perfectly; but if I had known this before, to engage a nurse—”

“Be satisfied, Sir; the person who employs you, knew better than to trust any thing to the taciturnity of a country doctor, or to the gossip of a nurse: and, Sir, be assured there will be observers on your conduct; your secrecy and prudence will find its reward; but should you be disposed to babble, or make discoveries, the former will be to your loss, the latter productive only of disappointment.”

The Doctor was silent; he was already reaping a golden harvest from the night’s adventure—Five hundred pounds! and at the end of the year as much more! Oh for a nurse, from whom a child so endowed might longevity!

The chaise rolled on as the first 500 was laying out to the best advantage; and besides the desirables it would purchase, he would, no doubt, obtain some great friends by the transaction, whom if he once could discover them, which notwithstanding the injunctions to the contrary, he resolved at least to attempt, must purchase his silence. Lost in these agreeable reveries, he forgot to note the time which passed before the carriage stopped, though that was so material a point in the discovery he projected.

The first entrance into the house, a little damped his idea of the consequence of his employers; he could perceive, notwithstanding the hood, it was small; the stair-case by no means calculated for the accommodation of a grand family; and the room into which he

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was led, when permitted to see, was furnished in so plain and undistinguished a manner, it was as impossible for him to note a single article, as it was unlikely people of any distinction inhabited it.

The groans from an inner room directed his attention thither; they became more loud and frequent. The masked person who accompanied him from Penry, remained with him, trembling and walking about in the utmost agitation; several times he turned from the doctor to unmask and wipe the perspiration from his face.

"I am certain," said the doctor, who really was skilful in that branch of the profession, "the lady wants my assistance;" and in that instant, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin entered to require it.

The masked person, alarmed beyond measure, burst into tears:—"Save! Oh save my child!" said he, putting a purse into the Doctor's hand, as he was hastily following the female into the inner apartment.

After two hours torturing suspense, on the part of the mask, and dangerous agony on that of the lady, Mrs. M'Laurin entered the room with a fine female infant, which, according to the order before given her, she prepared to dress.

The mask refused even to look at it:—"Should I," said he, "meet in its countenance a lineament resembling the serpent her father, how shall I restrain my rage? how conquer the desire to dash it to atoms;—and should she look like her mother, shall I not gaze on her till I forget what I have lost?—Never, never will I behold the offspring of the smiling villain, whose hypocrisy dealt destruction to me and mine."

"Ah, pure bairn!" said Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, "gude trothe an thou wert mine ain, my herte cude nae be mair fair."

"Silence!" said the duke, sternly, "thy Scotch tongue must not be heard."

"Trothe, my gude lorde," cried the honest woman, "I may haud my tongue, but an I were to dee, I caunna helpe greeting;—Oh 'tis a bonny cheel!"

During the many hours Lady Elinor had passed with this good creature, she had often repeated her unhap-

py story, and deplored the fatal consequences of her union with her lover. As Mrs. M'Laurin knew how every inch of the Athelane estates were settled at the duke's death; and as she believed in the validity of Elinor's marriage, and the legitimacy of her child, she had begun to feel herself both surprized and uneasy, when, as the time of child-birth drew near, she was kept in entire ignorance of the fate destined for the infant: her orders were, to dress it the instant it was born, in such plain things as were provided, and to have ready such wrappers as would fence it from the cold air.

"Weel, weel!" thought Moggy M'Laurin, "I sal do as hes grace orders; but I sal sete my merke upon the bairn, that I may auway ken the cheel of the hoose of Athelane:"—And accordingly, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin being mistress of the art of marking letters with gunpowder, and valuing herself on having been employed by the late duchess to work the coronet on the household linen, she made the two initials of the father and mother's surname, A. and B. on the child's left side under a coronet, while the duke paced the apartment in the utmost disorder, and while the doctor, quite as well disposed to note the event, contrived, during the few minutes he remained in the room after Mrs. M'Laurin, to cut a square piece out of an India chintz counterpane, which lay on the bed, and hide it in his bosom.

On his return to the mask, he received from him a bank note of fifty pounds, in addition to one hundred guineas in the purse: the doctor bowed to the ground: the mask then beckoned Mrs. Moggy, who held the child wrapped, according to order in swan-skin, to *fence it from cold*: he received it from her, and with another bank note for five hundred pounds, gave it into the hands of the still bowing doctor; and then, having again put on the hood, led him carefully to the chaise, which set off full speed.

The doctor had now, from mere impatience to dispose of his riches, lost all possible inclination to mark the length of the way; but his desire, and his power to arrive at the end of his journey, were two distinct things:

things ; for after driving near two hours, he was guided by the mask into another chaise, which seemed to cut the air during another hour, when it stopped.

“ You are now, doctor,” said the mask, “ entering London.”

“ London ! good God ! he—hem ! London ! what can I do—he—hem ! with this infant in London ! he—he—hem !”

“ The world, doctor,” replied the mask, gravely, “ is a country never to be known by description ; I have travelled through it, and have always found all sorts of accommodations are to be had for money : you have a tolerable sum now in your pocket ; you are not to suppose that the persons from whom you received it, had your convenience only in view, though this is perhaps the hardest duty they will impose, while you may with certainty, reckon on advantages from them in proportion to your care of the infant, which is now your own.”

He ceased ;—the chaise went on, and the string being loose, the hood presently dropped off,—when the doctor found himself, his charge, and six hundred and fifty pounds, in notes and cash, rattling over the stones in the Borough without his masked companion.

The chaise driver asked, where his honour would please to alight !

His honour did not know ; he had never before entered the metropolis in such style ; so the lad, taking his own directions, drove to the Cross Keys, Gracechurch-street, where a stage was that moment drawn out, which by the information on the pannel, he saw passed the house of his brother the farmer ; and it immediately struck him, that as Mrs. T. Croak was one of the best tempered and best dispositioned women in the world, and as, although she could not at certain times, help feeling a large portion of contempt for her proud brother-in-law, yet there were also times when she was brow-beat into an appearance of respect for him, she was the woman in the world most proper to take all the trouble of the infant off his hands at an easy rate, while he laid out the profits of his bargain to the *best advantage*.

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He therefore stepped out of the chaise into the coach, and, before he could lay the swanskin wrapper with the child on the seat, to get at money to pay the fare, both chaise and lad were out of sight. As the surprize of this incident was accompanied by the return of a guinea to ninety-nine shining fellows, it did not discompose the doctor, who, with his charge, whom warmth and motion had effectually lulled, was set down at his brother's farm, in the same instant that a neighbouring mechanic, whose wife was in labour and thought to be in danger, was imploring assistance from the farmer-doctor, which he was always ready to give to his poor neighbours gratis.

The farmer was not at home; and as Dr. Croak had a point to carry with his sister-in-law, after prevailing on her to take care of the infant till she could provide a nurse, he very readily complied with her request, and followed the poor man to his wife, whom he safely delivered of a female child, as he had truly related to Colonel Buhanun, with whom also, as he had *not* related to the Colonel, or any other person but those immediately concerned in the transaction, he also left his charge to be nursed, at sixteen shillings per month.

Mrs. T. Croak's conclusion at the sight of the infant, was, that her brother-in-law had made a faux pas which, it was natural to suppose, he wished to conceal from Madam Bawsky; but whether right in her conjecture or not, an innocent child was to her an innocent child, belong to whom it would; finding a slip of paper under its cap, with "Elinor," wrote on it, she had it baptized, on the Sunday following, by that name; and it was to her care the doctor attributed the child's healthy look, when three months after, he ordered the nurse to bring it to the milk-house in Hyde-Park, at a given hour, in consequence of a billet he received from the mask.

Mrs. Bawsky thought proper on this occasion, to send a fine robe and cap, laced with Valenciennes' edging, for the appearance of the child; and the doctor, not a little proud of its healthy countenance, attended himself to the place appointed, where Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin was in waiting for them.

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The good woman, who was now returning to Scotland, as the Duke and his family were on the point of leaving Britain, both himself and Lady Elinor being in ill health, with great difficulty had prevailed on his grace to allow her to see the infant before her departure; when the Duke found her importunities unceasing, he wrote to the doctor, not chusing to entrust the place of residence even to his female confidant.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin wept over the infant, and took especial care to note the mark on her side.

"I assure you madam," said the nurse, "'tis not dirt; I am sure I have washed her with soap and water as long as washing is good, and it won't stir:—my husband says as she will be a great schollard, for she is born with A. B. C. on her."

"Borne! nae, nae, my gude weef, trothe it was a merke of my ain, with a leetle gunpooder. Ah my precious bairn, hoo leeken her paupau she looks! my bonny cheeld! wha kens but the gude Gode may bring abooten his providence, sae that aw thy mithers mickle siller may come tull thee."

The nurse was a north country woman, but had she not understood the Scotch phrases, a purse of ten guineas, which, unseen by the doctor, Mrs. M'Laurin was ordered to put into her hands, were an explanation very much to the advantage of her nursery.

She returned home without revealing her good fortune, confident that she had the honour to suckle the child of some very great personage; and in consequence, immediately rose in her demands for nursing, from sixteen shillings to one guinea a month, and also for dozens of all sorts; which now, as three parts of the year were expired, as the doctor expected the second five hundred, and as he could not be certain how soon he might be called upon for another exhibition of the child, he thought proper to grant, as well as permission for the nurse to take her charge with her twenty miles further from London, where it suited her husband's business to remove,—and where she continued, at the same stipend, with now and then, what Mrs. Bawsky chose to think extravagant demands for clothing, three years, when the doctor received a letter by post, of which the following is a copy.

SIR,

SIR,

“Your child, for such she is now considered, is a gentlewoman, and you will be enabled to provide for her as such;—you receive inclosed a draft on Messrs. Adderly and Co. for one thousand pounds, which you are to understand is to be appropriated to the education of your daughter; a fund for her future provision will be vested in your hands at a proper time.

MASK.”

The draft was signed by a respectable merchant, and paid as soon as presented; on which Mrs. Bawsky thought proper to hire an additional female domestic, and having given the nurse notice of her intention, fetched home her charge.

Independent of being the doctor's pet, Elinor was a fine little creature, and the fondness of her adopted uncle and aunt increased out of all bounds, after she attained her sixth year; when a person, whose air and manner bespoke his high rank and quality, stopped at the doctor's door, and paid into his hands, six thousand pounds for the use of his daughter, without requesting to see, or even enquiring whether she were living or dead. Mrs. M'Laurin had indeed a second interview with her, at the same place, and satisfied herself in respect to her marks, a few months before this desirable event happened.

The Duke carried Lady Elinor with him to Italy, where, though he endeavoured in vain to get rid of the corroding anguish of his own deep regret, he was so happy as to re-establish the health of his daughter, whom he had persuaded, her child died in a few minutes after its birth; a statement she was incapable of contradicting, as her delivery was followed by a milk fever, from which she recovered, against the judgment of the faculty.

Change of air, youth, exercise, and the resources of her own firm mind, did that for Lady Elinor, which no effort of nature or art could do for her father; every hour of his existence endeared the memory of the blessing he had lost; his heart, he would say, was broken:—his decay was slow but sure; and, having permitted his daughter to decline the addresses

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of several noblemen, who were captivated by her beauty, he at length reminded her of her oath of obedience, and entreated she would let him see her married before he joined his fainted wife and son.

Lady Elinor's was a truly widowed heart; she calmly avowed the fire of love was extinct in her bosom. The duke frowned, she trembled; he apostrophized his duchess, she wept; he signed the name of Malcolm, and she was vanquished.

They were then at Florence; an accident, which will be related in a future chapter, made them acquainted with Lord Vallerton, who was then at the court of Florence in a public character; and there the marriage took place, which fixed the home of the beautiful Elinor far from the native castle, from the woods and well-remembered cavern of Athelane.

Lord Cheltenham had religiously kept his word: Lady Almeria herself was never acquainted with the particulars of a tragedy, her brother never forgave himself for occasioning; but what the duke could not conceal from himself, he thought it right to reveal to Lord Denningcourt, and that with the unreserved consent of Lady Elinor, who, considering herself as the widow of her first and only love, felt no shame in confessing to her future husband, she had been a mother.

Lord Denningcourt was too passionately attached to her to have given her up, had the circumstance been less favourable; but confident the woman he thought most beautiful, could not fail to be the most virtuous, he declined hearing particulars, taking it on Lady Elinor's word she was a widow; and she became his wife in the entire ignorance of the existence of her daughter.

Two of the last collected acts of Duke Athelane, were to send Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin to England, to certify the existence of his grand daughter, and to put into the hands of Lord James Athelane six thousand pounds, with directions to pay it to doctor Croak, for the benefit of his daughter; not, as he said, chusing to make this provision in his will.

Lord James, now Duke of Athelane, had some vague suspicion, that the provision was meant for the
offspring

offspring of some early gallantry, which his brother, though conscious of it himself, had reasons for concealing from the world, and therefore paid the money without expressing, or indeed feeling, any curiosity about the person who was to enjoy it.

Lord Denningcourt who was a man of the world, and always held an appointment, either at court, or in some department of government, had, in consequence of the former, occasional business to transact with Lord Gauntlet, and of course was on visiting habits with him; but the ladies were not acquainted, though they often met in the circle, and were near neighbours in the country.

It was by mere accident the two noblemen met at Sir Solomon Mushroom's door, on the morning when Major Buhanun was making enquiries relative to his nephew's effects.

Lord Denningcourt related the accident to his lady at court, where he met her. Her ladyship was taken ill soon after, and fainting in the circle, was obliged to be carried home.

She continued confined to her bed three weeks; but at the end of that period, torn with anguish and suspense, she formed the desperate resolution of seeing Major Buhanun.

Having informed herself, from Sir Solomon Mushroom, of his lodging, she repaired thither, and from thence, on the information of the people, to the inn, where, in the affecting interview which made so strong an impression on Elinor, she learned, that according to her own estimation, she had lived with her lord an innocent adultress: Wallace Buhanun, the dear unfortunate husband of her heart, having been relieved by a strong antidote, from the effects of the poison he had, in desperation, swallowed, was only lately relieved from life's "fitful fever." The major, who knew the late duke, as well as many other of his kindred and countrymen, had been informed of his nephew's existence, was astonished to find the person most concerned ignorant of his fate; he endeavoured to reconcile her to what could not now be remedied, or recalled; but though he succeeded in convincing her, that

to keep the anguish which almost distracted her, from disturbing the repose of her lord, was a duty she owed both to him and herself, she parted from him in a state of the most pitiable dejection; and the disorder of her mind had soon so dangerous an effect on her health, that, added to the mortification his son's conduct inflicted, induced his lordship to give up all his appointments, and retire to Denningcourt castle.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin was still an hearty old dame. The duke never trusted her with the place, or manner in which he had disposed of his grand-child; and to risk Lady Denningcourt's peace, during the life of her husband, without having it in her power, at least, to put her in the way of discovering her child, would answer no good purpose; but the news no sooner reached her, that the earl was dead, then down went her spinning-wheel, and away tramped Moggy twelve Scotch miles to Athelane castle, where she found the duke preparing to go south, on a visit to the noble widow.

On comparing Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin's information with the private provision made for the daughter of a person so near the place of Lady Elinor's *accouchement*, the duke could not doubt that Doctor Croak was in the possession of the secret clue to so interesting a mystery, and therefore took Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin with him to Denningcourt.

Lady Denningcourt's mind was made up; her relations were all rich; Mr. and Miss Angus her cousins, were heirs to her uncle, and the family estates, she determined, should remain in it; but to the thousands and tens of thousands in her own immediate gift, the poor, if Lord Denningcourt did not reform, she resolved, should be her heirs.

The duke came south, expressly to fetch her to Athelane, while every thing was completed at her own house: London was a place to which she never intended to return, and she had bid the gay world adieu.

But what a revolution did the intelligence now brought her occasion:—A child! Oh God! had she a child!—did she yet possess an object on which to lavish the fund of tenderness, which the recent news of
her

her Wallace revived in her bosom ; a child ! in whose dear face she might trace the never, never forgotten graces that won her young heart ! what ! a daughter ! a friend ! a companion ! to love, to cherish, to be proud of—to whom she might transfer that inexhaustible fondness which now assisted her too faithful recollection, in re-tracing the air, the manner, the look, the honour of her dear injured Wallace ! Oh why wait till to-morrow—why not set out that instant, that very instant ?—Alas ! many wretched years had she groaned in anguish, hiding her sorrows from the eyes and ears of the unpitying world ; and could she be happy too soon ? could a mother begin to atone to her child for the injurious deprivation of maternal love too soon ?

The duke was little less impatient : “ ah, my dear niece,” said he, “ your child must be amiable, she shall, she must be Duchess of Athelane !” Lady Denningcourt wept ; “ heaven grant her heart be not already touched, if it is, ah how miserable will it make us.”

Poor Lady Denningcourt ! “ Years,” said she, “ I have groaned in anguish ;” yet in the same instant, how easy did she fall into the enthusiastic error, from which she had herself suffered so much ;—she already anticipated the misfortune of her daughter’s having formed an attachment beneath her high blood, but all her feeling and experience did not suggest an idea of sacrificing pride to happiness, no such expedient occurred to the mother or uncle, no—nor to Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin.

During the long journey, nothing was talked of, but first, the resemblance the good woman protested the child bore to her father, and which her ladyship predetermined to doat upon ; then the match the duke planned, which, by uniting the grand-daughter of his brother with the son of his sister, would also unite the family honours and wealth ; a mere, Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin protested, of muckle importance tull all Scotland.

Arrived in London, they held a council how to proceed. “ Lest the dear creature should be overpowered with the excess of her joy,” said Lady Denningcourt,
“ my

“ my uncle had better receive us here ; Mrs. M'Laurin and myself will go to this doctor, and claim my child.”

“ Ah gude trothe, my lady, wull we ; and noo ye sal ken anither gude token ;” and she took from her trunk the counterpane, out of which the doctor had cut a piece, which Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin discovered immediately after he was gone, but which, in consequence of her presentiment, the child would one day be acknowledged, she had concealed.

With this important tie on the doctor's veracity, Lady Denningcourt and Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin set off for Penry, where, having demanded a private audience, the poor doctor foreboded the setting of his splendid sun, in the account he must give of money he had as lavishly parted with, as unexpectedly received ; he dared not deny the fact : Elinor was summoned ; the mark found, and washed with the tears of the fond mother.

Elinor was not, however, overpowered with joy ; her young heart was, indeed, not only touched—it was lost—gone past recovery.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin was a true Scots woman ; nothing she better remembered than money transactions ; the doctor, besides other sums which, as every body knew the late duke's generosity, he had undoubtedly received, had also been entrusted with six thousands pounds in one sum, for the use of his ward, which reminded by her, Lady Denningcourt merely mentioned, to prove whether he had been a faithful guardian ; and when she found by his hesitating and stammering, that he had made use of the little fortune which might have been her child's all, she expressed the strongest resentment, and indignantly commanded him to prepare to make restitution.

This, however, she would not have persisted in demanding, had not a discovery of her daughter's attachment enraged the duke, who insisted that the doctor had schemed his son's advancement, by throwing him in the way of his ward, though he must know she was of superior rank and connection.

Lady

Lady Denningcourt's heart melted in tenderness over her daughter ; that daughter, on the contrary had recollections inimical to respect :—she had set it down as a decided fact, that the lady who visited Major Buchanan, intrigued with him : Mrs. Bawsky had declared the thing was absolutely certain, and she had yet no reason to doubt her sagacity in facts of that sort :—then there were three people in the world she tenderly loved ; Rosa, young Croak, and Mrs. Harley ; from all these she was going to be torn :—with the former, as living with the person to whom her mother was criminally attached, she could not correspond—and how could she see the two last ? then again, she was used to the nominal uncle and aunt,—and with how many wiser people than Elinor does habit pass for affection.

It was in vain the gentle, affable Lady Denningcourt wished to gain the confidence of her daughter ; in vain she took her, in the most elegant style, first to Bath, then to Denningcourt ; she carried with her all her first unalterable predilections ; she felt abashed in company,—miserable alone, lost her colour, her appetite, and her spirits.

The reserve she promised Rosa in her letter to impose on herself, in regard to young Croak, lasted just as long as he found it impossible to speak to her, and vanished the first time he watched her walking at a distance from the house ; one interview succeeded another ; no letter arrived from Rosa to assist her struggles against love and young Croak : her mother's fondness was reproach ; her virtuous advice hypocrisy ; the polite habits she recommended tasks ; and at length, when the duke, to whom she never spoke with trembling, nor ever looked at without confusion, talked of making her a duchess, presenting her to the king and queen, and a thousand things to the same effect, wishing to excite her emulation, she fairly told Jack of all the dreadful things that were to happen, and as she had more money than she thought they could want during their whole lives, readily acceded to his proposal, of going off to Gretna-Green to be married, and escape being a Duchess.

10 They

They were stopped, as Betty said, and then the thoughts of being carried back to be made a duchess; to be shewn to the king and queen; to live with lords and ladies; to be decked with diamonds; to fare sumptuously every day; together with the sight of poor Jack first hanging to the wheels of the duke's carriage, then rolling in the road, tearing his hair, and biting the dust, was too much for her little reason,—it tottered on its throne, and to the unspeakable grief of Lady Denningcourt and her friends, was by degrees totally overthrown. She had been carried to Doctor W. and was now attended by a gentleman of the faculty recommended by him.

Meanwhile, young Croak having been sent home to his father, with denunciation of vengeance from the duke, if ever he was seen or heard of again at Denningcourt, old Croak could hit on no other way of keeping himself out of prison, but putting his son there; he therefore conscientiously arrested him for certain sums said to be advanced, of which the poor youth had never seen a farthing, and allowed him half a guinea a week to subsist on in the Marshalsea prison.

C H A P. IX.

Shewing, among other important matters, how the Beggar was turned out of doors; how she got one friend and lost another; and how fine Ladies manage, whose attachments are formed without esteem, and broken without regret.

THE bed of justice, held by Duke Athelane and the ladies his counsellors, ended as beds of justice formerly did where they were in fashion—the evidence was all on one side, and the edict pronounced by him in whom the power was vested accordingly.

The

The two young ladies agreed that our heroine was a very suspicious character, with this difference:—Miss Angus never saw a more interesting countenance, nor Miss Bruce a more artful one.

The Duke himself had taken very little notice of her person, but he confessed her emotions appeared to him natural enough; however, her residence with Mrs. Woudbe; her appearance, so unlike that of a person admitted to associate with the elegant Countess of Gauntlet; her passing at that hour so close to the house alone, and so ill dressed, were certainly circumstances which gave weight to the suspicion, that there was more of design than accident in the whole.

Elinor's attachment to young Croak was a matter which entirely militated against the Duke's first wish of uniting her to his nephew; that first wish still held so predominant a place in his mind, and he had so ardently pressed it upon Lady Denningcourt, that it was not till she found the poor girl's head unequal to her internal struggle, that she remembered how impossible she had herself found it, though blessed with a much stronger mind, to regulate a first passion by the laws of prudence; and though an alliance with a youth very inferior in person and talent to him who made the indelible impression on her own heart, who had not the advantage of education, and, above all, whose blood was plebeian, was not to be thought on, yet there were moments when she regretted the impossibility of making her daughter happy her own way. As she did not, however, communicate those regrets to the Duke, he still cherished the hope of seeing all the fortune of the House of Athelane united to the dukedom in the person of Mr. Angus; and not aware of the many channels through which the most important secrets of a great family meander into the world, hoped, when the reason of the unhappy Elinor was restored, of which he had the most sanguine confidence, her first passion would be forgotten, and remain a secret to all but the near friends of the family.

In this hope, the suspicion that Rosa was an agent of the Croaks, very naturally alarmed him; and as he could never have conceived, from his own feelings,
that

that such a character as a father, callous to the pleadings of nature on behalf of his only child, could exist, he certainly did Doctor Croak the injustice to believe him interested for his son; more especially, as marrying a young person of Elinor's high expectations, would also prevent his ever being troubled about the refund of property vested in him for her sole use. If, indeed, the last consideration had not escaped the wisdom both of the Doctor and his chere amie, the young man would not probably have been eating commons at this time in the Marshalsea prison.

Lady Denningcourt's mental sufferings, on account of Elinor's deranged intellects, were unspeakable: her whole system was unnerved, and the efforts of friends, by whom she was equally loved and respected, to console her under so great a calamity, were vain; the patient endurance of her character, indeed, prevented her wounding them with complaints; but the only real comfort she was capable of enjoying, was that which gave a foretaste of the eternal happiness which good actions must ensure to spirits like hers, when her soul sunk in despondent agony, she walked from her house to the village, where the inhabitants thronged round her with blessings.

The Duke of Athelane, a nobleman not more respected on account of his high rank, than beloved for the native urbanity of his mind, entered the library where our heroine was, prejudiced and prejudging, two evils from which the law of the land protects the greatest criminal, but from which the innocent stranger had no appeal.

Rosa, who was now acquainted with the Duke's quality, and who, notwithstanding she had so little reason to compliment her own discernment, having so recently found high virtues were not always concomitants of high rank, had a sort of inherent respect for nobility, and felt awed and confounded: she involuntarily rose at the Duke's entrance; and as his Grace neither seated himself, nor motioned to her to do so, she continued standing.

The Duke, full of his own subject, bluntly asked if she was acquainted with Doctor Croak?

Rosa hesitated and blushed.

Guilty upon honour! thought his Grace. The question was indeed, he said, superfluous. He next presumed she resided at Delworth House.

Again Rosa blushed and hesitated.

Guilty again, thought his Grace.

"I—I have lived there, Sir; but—but——"

"But you have thoughts, I presume, of leaving it."

Rosa's affirmative was decisive.

"And to remove. Perhaps you meant to do us the honour of removing hither?"

It was now only that Rosa perceived the haughty and austere brow of the noble interrogator; and she felt at once confounded, abashed, and distressed:—a thousand sharp points seemed to accompany the rushing blood into her face, neck, and arms.

"You blush:—is it from shame of detection? or, for guilt is very tenacious, I may possibly have had the misfortune to excite your anger? I do not, however, deprecate the resentment, in which you will have the goodness to leave this house, but you must allow me to add my advice—not to be seen near it again. Lady Denningcourt is a woman of honour, the young ladies under her roof have a character, and the Duke of Athelane is their protector. Permit me (and he offered his hand to conduct her)—I will shew you the way."

The heart of the poor Beggar swelled almost to bursting, when turned from the house of those who had created an interest so new in her feelings; yet so impressed with respect for the angry judge, who thus passed on her a sentence aggravated by irony and contempt, that she had neither courage to speak nor resist the motion he made of leading her, by a short turning, to a gate which opened to the park; but before she reached it, humbled and mortified as she felt herself, affection and concern for Elinor restored her to spirit and recollection.

A banishment from this tranquil abode was also a banishment from her Elinor, and that, perhaps, for ever. Comparing Betty's incoherent account with what she knew of the disposition of her poor friend, the

she flattered herself that her soothing and consolements would have more effect than any medical care, and resolved to make an effort of such importance to them both, and however difficult, to summons courage to resist the absolute command of the Duke,—oppose her humble remonstrance to his decided resolution..

Almost suffocated with heat and the variety of her feelings, she took off a little black hat, which confined her hair, and, with a motion of her head and shoulders, both graceful and interesting, threw back the redundant chestnut tresses it liberated, and inhaled the air before she could attempt to speak.

The Duke viewed her with fixed attention; and the severity of his look, by degrees, relaxed into a curious and not displeased scrutiny of her features; he nevertheless motioned to proceed towards the gate, but stopped when she spoke.

“If affection did not impel, if friendship did not support me, I could not, believe me Sir, presume, on my own account, to deprecate the severity you think I deserve. I venerate the character of Lady Denningcourt; but sure, with those monuments of her goodness and charity before me, it is not necessary to say how *much* I venerate her; yet, perhaps, all who admire and respect her, cannot feel the sentiment which at this moment—but I cannot explain it—it is indefinable even to myself. The young ladies, happy under her roof, and safe under the protection of the Duke of Athelane, can never be injured by mere suffering of a poor unprotected, unallied, unhappy—”

Her voice failed—she stepped forward to conceal her tears; and having a little recovered, finding the Duke had remained in the same place, turned back with a grace which was the peculiar character of her every movement; the waving tresses of her fine hair, shading her fair forehead; a tear on each glowing cheek; her hat in one hand, the other open palm modestly spread in an attitude of humble remonstrance; an earnest but melancholy meaning impressed on every speaking feature.

“Have I asked, Sir, to be admitted to the society of these happy ladies? alas! no;—I know and feel

the humble distance at which poverty and distress place me; *my* honour and *my* innocence is the honour and innocence of a friendless child of penury;—it is known only to God, and felt only by myself, and is of too obscure and humble a texture to claim even a candid judgment;—congenial principles cannot assimilate in uncongenial rank and circumstance—that is a hard lesson, with which I have long become familiar; therefore I gaze at humble distance on the radiant virtues I am not for that reason less emulous to imitate; and do not expect, nor even desire, that the ladies under the Duke of Athelane's protection, should descend from their high rank, and higher honour; all I petition for, and I conjure you, Sir, as you regard that dear girl, whose derangement I so deeply deplore, do not refuse me—I would kneel—I *will* kneel—mine is the humiliation of the heart—and it bends before you;—do not deny me—let me watch my Elinor—let me try whether the soothing of friendship will not have more efficacy than the art of medicine; you know not, my Lord, how she loved me—how I love her.”

“Do you know the cause of her disorder?”

“I am afraid I do, my Lord, know the cause to which it is attributed; but it may be the effect of more causes than one. The sudden change in her life, new claims on her affection, an entire new system of existence, a total subversion of her old habits and connections, the objects long dear to sight and memory lost, and replaced by others, which however preferable in themselves, are not endeared to her. These, irritated by a latent attachment, to which her feelings had not given a name, nor stamped a character, has been, I doubt not, the united causes of her disorder.”

This hint was precisely that most acceptable to the Duke; and the grace and energy of the fair pleader were irresistible;—there was in her manner, as John would perhaps have said,

“A prone and speechless dialect,
“Such as move men;”

and in her features a combination so familiar to the Duke, that when (her whole heart in her eyes) she besought

besought him to grant her petition, he answered, after a long and earnest examination of her countenance, by bluntly asking of what country she was?

Again the deep glow tinged her skin; yet the confusion was transient. She had owned the obscurity of her circumstances, and conscious that no inquisition could discover an action to her dishonour, answered, Essex.

“Essex!” repeated the Duke;—“and how old?”

“Twenty, my Lord.”

“What! the age of Elinor?”

“Yes, my Lord!”—and inspired by a ray of hope, which his softened look confirmed,

“ ————— we grew together,
 “ Like to a double cherry seeming parted,
 “ But an union in partition.”

The Duke half smiled. “You quote from high authority.”

“I quote like a parrot, Sir—what I have heard repeated from the heart of true affection;—but suffer me to quote *your* high authority, my Lord, for returning to my friend.”

“And how would you manage with your other friends? my authority would not excuse you there, for so rude and indecent a lapse of orderly behaviour, as remaining out late, without apprising them why and where you stay—the sun, you see, is setting; and we are not on habits of friendship with that family.”

Rosa could not, without intruding a long story on the Duke, and betraying her friend, explain to him how lately she had in some degree prepared the family at Delworth for such a lapse; she therefore remained silent—vexation and disappointment on her brow, which the Duke was earnestly reading.

“I am tempted to confess a great weakness to you,” said he, “if I thought you would not expose me.”

Rosa looked surprised, and rather alarmed.

“It is this,” he continued:—“within the last half hour I disliked you extremely, notwithstanding you are so handsome; that dislike was therefore the result of considering you, as, at best, I fear you are, a sus-

picious character; and though you have given me no proof to the contrary, except talking very prettily, and looking not handsomer, but more interesting, I feel myself disposed to take your beauty, and a resemblance you certainly have, come from where you will, to the amiable foundress of those charities, as a security for your integrity, though I know one is the common trait of deceit, and the other the certain effect of chance."

Rosa's alarm vanished. "If you knew, my Lord, how you flatter me——"

"Yes, you may well be flattered, if all your conquests are so sudden and so sure."

"Have I, then, conquered, my Lord? and will you lead me back to my friend?"

The Duke paused. "No," said he, "I am enslaved like an old man, but I will not be duped like one. Allow me to give you a good evening;—I shall talk the affair over with Lady Denningcourt, without concealing how much you resemble her, which alone will convince her I am not your foe; we shall make our arrangements, and depend on it you will hear of them."

What now could Rosa do but accept the Duke's offered hand, and suffer him to lead her to the park; where, after he returned to the house, considering it would be very late to go to the village, and perhaps indulging a secret presentiment that there would not, after the Duke's promised conversation with Lady Denningcourt, be a necessity for her going there at all, she cast a fond look behind, and returned to Delworth.

Crossing a court yard, in order to go to her chamber by the back way, she observed a great number of imperials, boxes, &c. and suspected, what had really happened, the bride elect and her party were arrived.

She had ascended only a few of the back-stairs when the house-maid, who gave her the letter in the afternoon, informed her, that as the house was now very full, and more company expected, and, as besides, their young Lord's intended Lady's woman chose to sleep near her Lady, the house-keeper had ordered the
things

things to be removed from the room where she had heretofore slept into one of the little garrets.

“ The garret ! ” repeated Rosa.

“ Yes, ’em ; ’cause, ’em, she supposes, ’em, you will not be long here, ’em.”

Rosa had turned half round, resolving, by immediately quitting the house, to avoid further insult ; but recollecting that she was to depend on hearing from the Duke, and that he would naturally send to Delworth, she resolved, at the risk of all possible endurance, to wait the result, and followed the girl into a small, low-roofed room on the attic story ; where all the things she left in her chamber were crowded, and where, squeezing herself by the bed to the one rickety chair, she sat down, pale, and almost breathless.

The girl said, as she had no dinner, no wonder she was faint ; but to-morrow—

“ To-morrow ! ” repeated Rosa—“ I trust I shall not pass another day in this house.”

Dear heart ! the girl wondered at that, as there was going to be sitch grand, new-fangled doings ; but come on’t what would, she would run and ax the house-steward for a glass of wind and some biscuits, for folk were not to be starved, if they did go to kept-madams.

Rosa never was in greater need of refreshment ; but though her body was not less fatigued and faint than her mind was agitated, she heartily regretted not going on to Denningcourt village ; for no place could be more comfortable or disagreeable than the garret, to which she was consigned.

The girl returned with her hands full. “ There,” said she, “ is a whole bottle of *Whydontee* wind, and a manchet, and some biscuits ;—no need of axing about the matter, wind and ale is as plenty all over our ouse now as water ; and you would be fit to die a laughing—they are all as joyous in sarvants’ all, as if the wedden-day was this minit. There’s one of the strange footmèn taken off one Madam Feversham.”

“ Feversham ! is Mrs. Feversham here ? ”

“ Yes, ’em ;—our ouse will be like the inn at Denningcourt—quite a Noak’s hark. And so the footman,

—I shall know his name at supper—he is so monstrous droll;—he ses Madam Feversham was all bedizon'd like an old ewe dressed lamb-fashion; and the old gentleman too—quite a smart old Grecian—what does he do—but chuck me under the chin, as funny as you please;—I wonder what Madam Feversham would say to that?—but come, 'em, let's be sociable (and drawing the cork, she first drank a glass of *Whydantee* herself, and then helped Rosa) and now, 'em," said she, squatting herself on the side of the bed, "I'll tell you a few secrets. Our family are going to Old Nick as fast as they can drive; our Lord's over head and-ears in debt to all the rich tenants, and so hard-hearted to the poor, and raises their rents so, they can't pay;—so they were ready to go wild with joy when the lawyer came down to injunket them all not to pay our steward; and so, without the bride's portion, Lord knows how we should all get back to Pall-mall again. Oh, London, London!—Lord, I am so dry!—but London's the place for my money! though there's Old Nick to pay there too;—there's Lady Lowder, and that handiome Sir Jacob, only our folk don't want it mentioned just now, 'cause 'tis a disparagement to the bride; but her husband says as he'll put 'em in the Commons, unless the old gentleman comes down."

Mrs. Modely at this instant threw open the door, and scowling under her curved brow, at the girl, the wine, and Rosa, ordered the latter to follow her to her lady.

Perhaps it was not an absolute miracle, that though the beauty of the lovely Countess of Gauntlet was, with the aid of a little art, stationary, experience should have so encreased her natural talent for intrigue, she was at this period an over-match for Sir Solomon Muthroom himself, who, of all her dear and particular friends, was him against whom she bore the most inveterate hatred, for reasons it is time to unfold to our readers.

The first hint the Earl, and of course his beautiful Countess, received of the existence of their nephew, was from the best lawyer in Great Britain; her ladyship's rosy lips severed on this occasion with execrations
on

on the duplicity of their agent Sir Solomon Mushroom, and on herself if she did not revenge it.

The Earl now regretted he had declined the alliance of the greatest scoundrel in the world;—the Countess, with equal sincerity, wished the Earl of Denningcourt had never been introduced to the Mushrooms:—to these regrets succeeded a resolution, by breaking off one treaty to make way for another, and with other rules of conduct to be observed at this critical period, preceded the writing a card requesting to see Sir Solomon Mushroom.

Though that profound politician, who like the robber in Gil Blas dealt on the square with all mankind, was already in possession of the secret, and had made his own calculations to profit by the event, preponderate how it would, he chose to be the most astonished person of the three, when he attended his patron, and heard from the Countess what had happened.

“Did you not tell us this shocking boy was dead, Sir Solomon?” cried her Ladyship, with bitterness.

“When, my good Lady?” answered the knight, with great composure.

“Certainly, my good friend,” joined the Earl, mildly, “you gave us room to conclude—”

Sir Solomon collectedly denied the conclusion, and with infinite respect, referred to his letters from Philadelphia.

Lady Gauntlet’s acquired habit of smiling, ill concealed her rage at his triumphant proof of cunning; but the Earl, with equal wisdom and moderation, delivered it as his decided opinion, that the honour and interest of his good friend Sir Solomon Mushroom, were as much interested as his own, in defeating the claims of the pretended heir.

This the knight neither granted nor denied in a manner so lukewarm, as convinced the noble pair, something was rotten in the state:—Lady Gauntlet then artfully dropping a conversation, in which he was not interested, began one on his daughter and her expected marriage, but was astonished to find that too treated with indifference.

The Countess was not a woman to be foiled by cunning; she was not an intimate in Sir Solomon's family, but her woman was; and having learned, within two hours after his departure, that though Mrs. Persian, Miss Mushroom's woman, was one of the best dressers of hair, and layer on of rouge, of any English woman in London, an old family nurse, admitted by stealth, robbed her of one of the first privileges of her place, for she was the exclusive repository of all her young lady's secrets, and with this nurse our Countess instantly became acquainted.

Sir Solomon Mushroom had too many affairs of importance on his mind to remember the unlimited confidence he had formerly reposed in one Dorothy Wright; her memory however was less tenacious—she very well knew the child, whom she had assisted Mr Hanson in persuading her mistress to carry to America, was the same youth to whom her eldest daughter was attached.

When it did not militate against her own or her children's interest, nothing gave Dorothy more pleasure, than crossing the humour of her old master, and in the confidence that Horace would some time or other turn out a somebody, she had encouraged her daughter to expect the return and advancement of her first love:—as to Lords, since her youngest daughter had married one, and forgot her, Dorothy thought they were no great ketch; but after vain expectation of the somebody's return, Horace was on the point of being given up, both by nurse and Miss, as the former waited only for her daughter's establishment, to demand her own terms of their father, and the latter saw so many charming consequences of being a Countess, that had not Lord Denningcourt been such a lazy woer, she would have infallibly been one herself.

But Horace happened to present himself just in the very nick of time, to enquire after the Beggar, with an appearance so elegant, and a demeanour so haughty, as raised the colour in Miss Charlot's cheek, and threw her father into the most profound meditation.

So as Sir Solomon's girls were peeresses, no matter who were the peers;—he had never forgiven his patron for declining his alliance; and as in case of a public investigation,

investigation, if his own immaculate character escaped, it must be by miracle, he wisely determined to secure that, and the fortune and honours of the house of Montreville, in spite of the power of his patron, or the beauty of his lady, by offering to Horace his daughter, and eighty thousand pounds, twenty more than he gave her sister, with some certain *proofs* to be included in the marriage portion.

Of this offer he told his daughter, who understood nothing of the *proofs*; but she told it her nurse, who comprehended the whole, and, under the influence of a beautiful card purse, respectably filled, *she* again told it to Lady Gauntlet, who knew much more of the matter than herself, and who of course was filled with revengeful ire, against the traitor Sir Solomon Mush-room.

It was in the interval between Sir Solomon's offer, and the young gentleman's answer, that the former was summoned to hear of the existence of young Montreville; and it was also then that Lady Gauntlet formed a plan of revenge worthy of herself.

Sir Solomon thought, as his former employer Mr. Whittal was dead, that the secret of the Montreville's rested only in himself; he therefore resolved to make or unmake, as suited his own private interest or humour.

Lady Gauntlet was better informed;—beside Sir Solomon and the communicative Mrs. Dorothy who gratified her own pique by revealing all she knew, save and except the maternal secret of such importance to her daughters, there were two more persons, one of whom she knew, and the other she feared, would arise in evidence against her.

Mr. Whittal, her relation at Belfast, on whom, by her interest, advancement and lucrative places had been showered, died, notwithstanding all, insolvent; and his only son, a fine tall handsome Hibernian, appeared at the Earl's levee in very shabby mourning, without sixpence in his pocket, or any means of subsisting like a *gentleman*, except a few secrets confided to him by his father, on his death-bed.

Lady Gauntlet procured this young man a lucrative appointment in the Colonies, and with five hundred guineas in specie to begin the world, he fell down the river Thames in a West India trader.

"I breathe," said her ladyship, "now that horrid fellow is gone."—But this breathing business was rather premature, for though her young relation did certainly sail down the river, yet before the ship reached the Nore, the wind became adverse; he run up to London for one night, staid three, went to half a play, a brothel, and a gaming-house; from the last he returned *minus* in the neat sum of five hundred pounds, besides his watch, buckles and every other portable of value.

In this situation, stripped of every thing but the secret entrusted to him by his dying parent, Mr. Patrick Whittal again presented himself at the levee of his relation, the Earl of Gauntlet.

My Lord was at that particular time not only very angry, but very poor, and my lady the same;—notwithstanding which, after a few hours consideration, a second five hundred were advanced; and cousin Whittal swore he would never trouble such kind relations more; that he did not keep his word was not so much his fault as his misfortune, for he let out in a chaise and four from his lordship's door; but the wind having become favourable, the ship, after waiting two tides, had sailed without him.

"Amid the roses, fierce repentance rears her snaky crest."

This Lady Gauntlet might have owned, had she not been too proud to admit any thing against herself; for cousin Whittal was now on the town, spending the second five hundred with the spirit of an Emperor, and in danger of being superseded in the appointment procured for him with great trouble and difficulty: This cousin was, however, but one, and not perhaps that most feared, of two evidences which, as soon as the claims of the rightful heir were known, would rise to crush her.

The last time the late Earl of Gauntlet was mentioned, he was ordered to a milder climate for change
of

of air, which is in plain English to say, that the physicians had pocketed fees, without benefitting their patient, till their modesty could do so no longer; and therefore, that the inefficacy of the cart-load of medicines, which they had prescribed, should not be witnessed by the swinish multitude, they rather chose his spirit should be resigned in a foreign land; and accordingly the Earl, his beautiful sister-in-law the honourable Mrs. Montreville, with her as honourable spouse and a splendid retinue, set out for Italy, landed at Leghorn, and so on to Florence, where, in a superb palace, on the banks of the Arno, the Earl flattered himself he was recovering, while basking in the brilliant glances which shot from the eyes of his fair sister, he waited to a shadow.

Lord Vallerton, son to the then aged and respectable Earl of Denningcourt, was minister at the Tuscan court during the residence of the Earl of Florence, and of course, tho' a widower, and father of a fine youth of sixteen, an admirer of her whom all the world admired, till the Duke of Athelane, who, like Lord Gauntlet, retreated to Italy from the universal conqueror, and like him also, was accompanied by a beautiful female companion in a palace on the banks of the Arno, caused an alteration in his feelings.

Lady Elinor Athelane was all Mrs. Montreville was not, and Lord Vallerton's heart was very soon really devoted to her.

This being one of the injuries Mrs. Montreville never forgave. The Duke, who visited his invalid countryman, though the ladies were on very distant terms, found the cordiality, with which he was at first received, gradually diminish; and he was on the point of entirely declining his visits, when a loud cry for assistance, and confused exclamations of the Earl's English servants, mixed with the Italian, induced him to rush from his own palace into that of his neighbour, where he met Mrs. Montreville in the saloon, pale and disordered, exclaiming against the wretch! the vile murderers! and, on entering an inner apartment, beheld the Earl, wounded, fallen from his chair in the arms of his brother, and, at a small distance, a beautiful

tiful female, of wild and disordered appearance, whose bright black eyes seemed starting from her head, and her face o'erspread with the hue of death.

"Oh, Duke!" said the wounded man, "are you come? do you condescend to visit me at this awful moment,—to be my comforter.—to stand between my soul and the blackest perdition? I am wounded, and my weak state forbids me to hope for life; but bear witness of what I declare:—that lady is my wife—I have injured, I have ruined her—but I am her lawful husband—I deserve the death I have received from her hand;—but, Duke, *she* is innocent. I *know you*—promise to protect her—to remove her out of the reach of indignity;—she is virtuous, and of family—promise, and I shall die in peace."

The starting eyes of the lady were fixed in deep and hollow attention on the wounded man; as he finished the last sentence, she uttered a shriek, and fell into convulsions.

The surgeons, who now arrived, desired she might be removed; and Mrs. Montreville was prepared to assist the servants in carrying her away.

"Stop!" cried the Earl, with such agitation, that streams of blood flowed not only from his wound, but out of his mouth and nostrils—"touch her not. Oh, Duke Athelane! will you see me expire in torture?—your own Elinor is not more pure."

The Duke of Athelane was one of the few British noblemen who carried the honour and credit of their country with them among foreigners, and who returned with it to their own land untarnished; his word was sacred, and he was consequently cautious of giving it; but the convulsive grasp of the wounded man, the pitiable distortions of the fine countenance before him, and a recollection of the sad events in his own family, which had given a death-blow to his domestic peace, were irresistible impulses to sympathy; he not only promised to protect the injured wife, but, on the Earl's repeating "Take her away—for God's sake, take her away," he gave orders for her removal to his own palace, whither, as soon as the Earl's wound was dressed, he followed.

Lady

Lady Elinor, of whose soft and sympathising disposition it is impossible to say too much, needed no stronger claim on her attention, than the suffering of a fellow-creature. But when the lady revived to a sense of her misfortunes, and a power to recite them, her cause appeared to be that of humanity; and the Duke's anxiety to protect her, became more ardent than even that of the penitent husband.

When Magdalena presented herself at the grate of the convent of the order of mercy, and found, though received with demonstrations of tenderness by the Abbess, that she had been the dupe of a forgery, which could answer no purpose but separating her from her child, no persuasions nor proffered advantages could prevail on her to remain at Lisbon a moment after a vessel was procured to carry her back to England.

Don Joseph Tavora Alvarez, who was yet a bachelor, would have withdrawn his claims on her grandfather's fortune, had she condescended but to conceal a ceremony, which left her a deserted wife; but, besides that she never could stoop to ambiguity—the will that disinherited her was unequivocal; and she imputed all her sufferings to the having violated it.

In the agonies which incertitude of her child's fate inflicted, it was to the care of the Abbess alone that she was indebted for the independence with which she returned to England.

"I shall see you no more, my child," said the tender aunt; "but my fortune at least is my own, and neither that nor my blessing can injure thee."

Having procured from the factory a number of English bank-notes, in exchange for gold, after putting what was necessary into a purse, the good Abbess made a confidential sister quilt the rest in the corsets of the distracted Magdalena, who, with a fortune thus rendered portable, sailed for Falmouth.

The winds, though favourable, bore no proportion to the impatience of Magdalena: she landed at Falmouth—got into a chaise—reached Holy-Ash—found it in ruins—heard that her son had been taken by Mrs. Littleton and her lover Mr. Hanson, to London—followed them thither—inquired in vain of all Mrs.

Littleton's

Littleton's acquaintance—took the resolution of going to Belfast after Hanson—found Mr. Whittal there, but found him dumb in respect to the object of her enquiry.

As *there were*, however who could and did talk, Magdalena heard her husband had really outlived all his cousins—that he was a British Peer,—that he was a bachelor, and so fond of his brother's wife, that it was expected her children would be heirs to his fortune as well as title.

Magdalena's heart sunk—her head turned round—This then, was the fatal mystery : her child was removed to make way for those of this sister-in-law. Italy ! what ! was it to follow them to Italy ! to the world's end she would follow ! she would pierce into the bowels of the earth ! yes, and she blessed the provident kindness of the superior of the order of mercy, who had so amply supplied her with the means ;—she would hire a vessel and set off that very day.

But Magdalena's mind happened to be too potent for her strength—she was obliged to wait the crisis of a fever ; during which the good woman who was hired to attend her, did her part towards relieving her of all worldly cares, by stealing her pockets, her watch, and the few clothes she brought with her from England.

The people of the house who were not in the secret, redoubled their attention after this accident ; and Magdalena having still her corsets left, and thinking of nothing but her voyage, made so light of the theft after her recovery, that it was with as much surprise as reluctance they saw a woman who had such extraordinary resources, and valued money so little, leave their house.

The voyage was short. Magdalena had learned, from a banker at Belfast, Lord Gauntlet's exact directions. She reached Florence the day after her arrival at Leghorn ; was set down at the portico of the palace which the Earl occupied, and rushed, unannounced, through the saloon into an inner apartment, where her husband and his divine sister-in-law were reposing, without a presentiment of so unwelcome a visitor, after an airing in the beautiful vale of Arno—the Earl's pistols, who adhering to the fashion of dear little Ireland
never

never made any excursion without them, lying on a table beside him.

The Honourable Mrs. Montreville shrieked, and Lord Gauntlet shook from head to foot, at sight of the injured Magdalena, whose disordered dress, the wildness of her manner, the fire darting from her eyes, and her eager demands to have her child restored to her, petrified the one, and astonished the other; for his Lordship, with all his plans, would never have hit on one so diabolical as robbing a fond mother of her only child.

Magdalena, with the essence of purity in her soul, and an indignant sense of injury on her brow, scorned to bestow a glance on her libertine husband's companion; it was the agonized feelings of a mother, a fond and doating mother trembling for the fate of her darling, that spoke in every anxious feature, as regardless of the Earl's real, and Mrs. Montreville's well-feigned astonishment, she incessantly demanded her child.

Mr. Montreville entered, and would have interfered.

"Away, away!" cried the almost frantic Magdalena, "dare not to interpose between a distracted mother, and a wretch whose actions outrages nature;—who art thou?"

Mr. Montreville made an attempt at dignity;—he had the honour to be Lord Gauntlet's brother, and that lady's husband.

"Hah!" cried Magdalena, a deadly pale overspreading her face, "art thou the brother? and is that woman thy wife? Ah, my child! my Horace! my sweet boy! sole treasure of my existence!—Oh thou accursed father! what hast thou done? Speak, save me from madness! thou can'st not!—and is my child murdered? was he in the way of this sister and this brother? and must I never see my beautiful boy? never hear his sweet voice!—Oh Montreville, have pity on me! restore my child! I will forgive and pray for thee!"

"You rave, Magdalena—I cannot restore."

"Oh!" shrieked Magdalena seizing one of the pistols, "cannot!—"

"It

"It is loaded!" cried Mrs. Montreville flying out of the room.

Mr. Montreville caught the desperate hand which held the fatal weapon bent on self-destruction;—in the struggle the pistol turned, and went off; the Earl groaned and fell from his chair; Magdalena stiff with horror, dropped at his feet—and thus ended her melancholy narrative.

The next morning the Earl was considered as drawing near his dissolution, and Magdalena passed it at the feet of her crucifix. Not so the fair Mrs. Montreville; she flew to the Palazza Pitti, where she displayed her grief, her eloquence, and her beauty, with such effect, that a person high in the confidence of the Grand Duke, related the aggravated story to the Sovereign, and procured an order for the imprisonment of Magdalena, which, but from the timely notice of Lord Vallerton would have been executed.

Though the high souled Magdalena trembled at the guilty desperation, that would have rushed, unbidden, before the creator she feared not to die; but to be condemned as a criminal, on the evidence of people interested in her destruction; to dishonour her noble family, and stamp disgrace on the name of the brave admiral her father, by an ignominious death;—to leave her son, if yet he lived, an unpitied orphan, was terrible—yet such was the clamour raised against her, and such her predicament as a foreigner whom the English minister could not protect, every thing was to be dreaded, if the Earl, as was hourly expected, should die.

The Duke and Lady Elinor were incapable of any efforts, so affected were they with her danger;—Lord Vallerton, however, was too solicitous to obtain the approbation of the fair Elinor, and too much interested for the innocent stranger to remain inactive.

A yacht always awaited his Lordship's commands at Leghorn; there was not a moment to lose, he put her into his English chaise, and attended by his own servants, had proceeded near two miles before the officers of justice demanded her at the Duke of Athelane's residence.

Lord

Lord Vallerton recommended Magdalena to the captain in the strongest terms; she was attended by a Scots woman from the *suite* of the Duke, and he had the pleasure to see the yacht out of reach of pursuit, before he returned with the welcome tidings to Lady Elinor, whose smile

“Through a sea of liquid pearl,”

was his rich reward.

As the Duke had no suspicion the order for Magdalena's imprisonment could proceed from those to whom her innocence was so well known, he hastened to inform the penitent, and as he thought him, dying Earl, both of her danger and escape; the joyful emotion the news inspired, was unaffected; it broke an abscess on his liver, which contrary to hope, he had strength to throw up, and from that hour he gradually recovered; the wound, which independent of other symptoms was not dangerous, healed, and the good Duke began to rejoice in the hope of seeing him again re-united to his amiable wife.

But Thyrsis the sick, and Thyrsis the well, were never more distinct personages; the traits of remorse, and professions of reformation, which justice wrung from the Earl when he thought himself “at the awful moment, when all men speak truth,” vanished before the fascinating and tender glances of Mrs. Montreville's bewitching eyes, like a beautiful frost-work, raised under the keen blast of winter, which dissolves and disappears before the morning sun-beam; not even the news, which overwhelmed the Duke and his daughter with affliction, that the yacht, which had orders to land Magdalena at Leith, had been wrecked on the Scotch coast, and every soul perished, had power to weaken the charm which infatuated him during the remainder of his short life.

The Duke was disgusted, and, spite of the syren, the Earl ashamed. Mrs. Montreville soon after discovered the climate of Naples would be more congenial to his state of health than that of Florence. He accordingly removed thither *to die*; and his corps was brought to Ireland, and buried with great funeral pomp.

Lady

Lady Gauntlet triumphing in the success of her schemes, became Countess of Gauntlet; and though, after some time when she met Lady Elinor Athelane first as Lady Vallerton, afterwards as Countess of Denningcourt, she had felt in the marked and scornful disgust with which the indispensable civilities were received and paid by that lady, both at court and in private houses, that she perfectly remembered every occurrence at Florence; yet as recollections, unsupported by proofs, and not called for by a claimant, could neither uncountess nor rob her of the adoration her beauty excited, she contented herself with professing to admire the woman whom, though it was impossible she could like, she had the less reason to fear, as Lord Denningcourt was too polite to recur to an event so disagreeable both to her lord and herself.

But when the son of that unhappy mother, whose memory Lady Denningcourt cherished with equal affection and respect, appeared to claim his rights, under the sanction of his venerable grandfather, then it was that the Countess of Gauntlet began to fear the exactitude of her recollections; and though the Duke, to whom the late Earl had avowed his marriage, was no more, the assertions of his daughter, whether competent or not in a court of law, would receive such full credit in the world, as must injure her in the opinion of those respectable persons on whom she had hitherto so artfully practised, as to be herself, and to make others, what she pleased.

This was a reflection, to which the detected treachery of Sir Solomon Mushroom, and the teasings of her cousin Whittal, were but subordinate vexations; and she had already half suggested a scheme to escape part of the ignominy due to her nefarious practice. If she and the good Earl, her husband, could by any means escape the storm themselves, they had no objection to see it burst in thunder on their colleague; and were actually meditating on the means, when, behold, from the world of waters, another and most damning witness raised to compleat their overthrow and confusion.

The solicitor employed by the Earl sent them the astonishing and unexpected intelligence, that the
daughter

daughter of Admiral Herbert, the mother of their young adversary, was living, and actually at the seat of the former, whither she had been conducted by Mr. Adderly; and scarce had they perused this unwelcome note, before a second arrived, with the as little expected account, that the clergyman who married the late Earl, was also found near the same place.

There was no longer time for deliberation—the Countess immediately began to act.

Convinced that all would be discovered in a process at law, she resolved not to abide the event of a trial.

Her cousin Whittal was the only person who could, even on hear-say evidence, prove the Earl or herself privy to carrying off the young lord; and though that young man was in the prettiest train of pleasure imaginable, he had sense enough to know, that a secret in possession of half a score lawyers was not worth a thirteener; he therefore faithfully promised to take the very first opportunity of possessing himself of his appointment for the very striking reason, that if that were lost he could not get another.

Having secured this point, her ladyship, in the greatest distress, revealed what she chose should be a statement of her situation to all her powerful friends, protesting her own innocence, lamenting the fraud which the Earl had unknowingly been guilty of, and declaring their mutual resolution to resign the title and estate, the hour the claimant's legitimacy was proved, though it would reduce her to the most extreme distress.

Distress! Lady Gauntlet! the beautiful divine Lady Gauntlet distressed! abominable! shocking! it was an affair of more than national consequence, and must be prevented.

These warm friends of Lady Gauntlet were not very famous for penetration, nor much respected for the morality of their characters; but they had what was preferable to either, great interest; they struck every body, who chose to hear them, dumb with admiration, of the honour, the generosity, the justice, and humility of the beautiful Countess. Such able advocates, indeed, did they prove themselves, that a pension on the establishment of her own country for life,

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an additional employment of honour and profit for the Earl, with a continuation of all his court employments, and, finally, but that not immediately, the rank of peers in her own right was actually promised.

Sir Solomon Mushroom having in the mean while received a most haughty rejection of his niece, his money, and his *proofs*; he visited the Earl, with his gall inflated with revenge; and as Lord Denningcourt too had suddenly flown entirely off, the Countess considered that her friends could command every thing but money; that this was what she could not possibly do without, and that she knew of no other possible means of procuring it, so she agreed that her lord should renew the old idea of uniting the families.

Sir Solomon made certain that he held the fate of the Earl of Gauntlet in his own bosom; and as he resolved to be true himself, agreed his niece and eighty thousand pounds should be Lord Delworth's; and the Countess, on her part, who having once laid a load of guilt on his shoulders to her friends, could not, and remembering his offences, would not retract, meditated many ways of mortifying him, besides that of informing him, the day after his niece's marriage, that he had not bought a coronet for her, nor secured his own character.

How could Lady Gauntlet, or any other lady with so many affairs on her head and successful in all, exist without a confidant of some sort? and who so properly qualified for the honorable office as Mrs. Woudbe? a lay, whose delicacy and moral rectitude was put on and off with infinitely less trouble than her *rouge*—not that the Countess was so unmindful of the respect due to herself, as to own her guilt to one as guilty—no, it was the triumph and revenge that could not be well enjoyed, without being also a little talked of; it was, indeed principally to gratify the latter passion that she took Rosa to Delworth, with so many advantages of person and ornament; nay to mortify the Mushrooms, she would not have been displeased to see the coronet she could no longer wear herself, deck the brows of the Beggar.

When

When however, Mrs. Woudbe, after complimenting her on the policy of her arrangement in the usual lady-like way, exchanged secret for secret, what must have been her beautiful ladyship's astonishment to find in her confidant the person destined to succeed her in her title and home.

Mrs. Woudbe being in the stage-box at the play without her husband, (no uncommon thing) was so disturbed by a quarrel between some young bloods behind, that it obliged her, in common decency, to faint; and being taken great care of by a handsome young man, her heart, for the at least fiftieth time, rebelled against her liege lord, in his favour.

As this Adonis wore a cockade, he was of course, a captain—as long as he pleased—and the event proved him more moderate than many of his sort; for he laid down his captainship before it laid down him, and announced himself Horace Montreville, only son of the late Earl of Gauntlet, plaintiff in a suit in chancery now pending between him and the present Earl; and indeed, made his title out so clear, and was in possession of so many family anecdotes, that no doubt could be entertained of his identity and success.

Every body who has the felicity to appeal to the wise laws of this realm, and the honest men who make it the business of their lives to understand them, will know, that though magna charta may do much, money will do much more—even Counsellor Fire-brand will not open his mouth for or against, or, as it often happens, both for and against, without a fee; and no justice or injustice can be had in the courts of law without money; no wonder therefore, that, in a cause of such magnitude, the wronged heir of a British Peer should stand in particular need of assistance from his friends.

Mrs. Woudbe greatly assisted him both in money and jewels; but though, considering the compact between them which secured to her a share of all advantages, this was no more than fair, she did not impart it to her friend the Countess. As to the mode by which her elevation was to be accomplished, though it may be inconvenient to little folks, nothing can be more common,

mon, fashionable, or regular in succession, among the haut ton, than an intrigue, a discovery, a divorce, and a marriage ; which brings the parties into a situation to begin again, and so on, *ad libitum*

Lady Gauntlet, who valued herself on fine acting, had acted sensibility so well with Rosa, and so well pleased with the grateful attachment to her person and interest, which that acting excited, that nothing less than what now happened could have so compleatly changed her sentiments and conduct.

Having indulged her passion for Lord Denningcourt, which she had also acted into reality, at a time and place when no other passion was in its way, which had never before been the case ; and finding it returned with the most provoking coldness and neglect, her ladyship found herself in a disposition to act, to the life, all the extravagance of a disappointed woman, before the same good creature, who lost her character by waiting on poor Kattie Buhanun, after having lived four years a very useful servant to the Countess, added jealousy to her other mortifications, by acquainting her, as before mentioned, that Miss Walsingham passed the night at the castle. This information was followed by two natural conclusions :—Lord Denningcourt could not be less charming in other eyes than hers ; and he could not have been cold to her, without an attachment to some other object ;—and a conclusion, more natural than either, was, that the Countess of Gauntlet most cordially detested her rival.

C H A P. X.

Women of fashion nonplussed—the Beggar first talks out of all reason, and then is run away with—a common cause and effect among modern Misses.

ROSA obeyed the haughty mandate delivered by Mrs. Modely, and followed her to the best drawing-room, which, in honour of the company, was already lighted up.

How

How changed were the politics of the lady of the mansion, since she felt a most dear pleasure in anticipating the mortification Sir Solomon Mushroom and his fair nieces would feel on meeting Rosa under her roof, with every advantage of person and dress, and every appearance of happiness.

But the difference was—she then considered her as rivalling *them*; she now felt her rivalling *herself*.

The whole family of the Gauntlets, the Earl excepted, Sir Solomon Mushroom, his niece, Mrs. Feversham, Lady Louisa, and Mr. Brudenel, were in appearance, assembled to witness the humiliation of Rosa.

Sir Solomon sat in great state on the right of the Countess; Mrs. Feversham on the left; Miss Mushroom, elegantly attired, was arranging some beautiful flowers for a *bouquet*, with her lover agreeably trifling by her side; the Major and Lady Louisa on an opposite sofa; the three young ladies, Madame Rosette, and Mr. Brudenel, with a *porte feuille*, before them, though not looked at after Rosa's entrance, who not expecting such an assembly of elegance, and dazzled by the lights, felt confused, and drew back.

The fatigue she had undergone, her hair blown out of all order by the evening breeze, in her walk through Denningcourt park, her rusty black habit, and faint look, formed a contrast sufficiently gratifying to those who envied or who hated her.

Lady Gauntlet glanced her eye over her whole figure with expression of rancour it was impossible for Rosa to understand.

"My God!" cried Mrs. Feversham, "can this be Miss Walsingham?—I protest it is, and in her old rusty black habit. Why, Lord! I vow I thought Lord Denningcourt had you in keeping at the frightful old castle yonder. I am glad you was not such a fool;—but pray, have you worn that shabby habit ever since?"

Again Lady Gauntlet's eye shot beams of indignation at Rosa as she slowly advanced. "Stop, where you are, Miss," said she, with the air of a Russian Empress. "Dear Sir Solomon, how shall I apologise to you, or my sweet Charlotte for having (notwithstanding I might have known, that had this girl been

worthy my protection, yours would not have been withheld) been so prepossessed in her favour by that artful wretch, Lord Denningcourt."

"Artful!" cried Mrs. Feversham, happening to cast her eyes on the pretty bracelets he had himself first put on her arm—"well, I declare, I never heard he had that character;—but, to be sure, he is vastly handsome—has the finest person, and whitest teeth, of any man of fashion I ever saw."

Lord Delworth and the Major bowed.

"Present company, you know, gentlemen."

"You are vastly polite, ma'am;" and Miss Mushroom's seat grew uneasy.

"Polite! I hope I am not unpolite, Miss; I think I ought to know how to behave in *any* company."

Sir Solomon, to whom these spars, though familiar, were not very agreeable, begged Lady Gauntlet would proceed.

"Lord Denningcourt's fine person and white teeth," resumed her ladyship, "seems to have made a stronger impression on Mrs. Feversham than I confess they ever did on me."

Mrs. Feversham might be piqued into a talking fit, but never into a silent one;—she was sorry for that—it was not her fault, nor Lord Denningcourt's.

It might possibly be hers, her ladyship coldly said; but to leave his lordship's perfections, she confessed herself to have forgotten the respect due to her own character, as well as her friend Sir Solomon Mushroom, when she took a low artful person under her protection, and recommended her to one of the best women in the world as her companion.

Rosa recovered from her confusion in an instant.

"Mrs. Woudbe—you know Mr. Woudbe, Sir Solomon of Portman square, a man of immense fortune."

"We were at a masked ball there with the Countess, uncle."

"I remember it perfectly; Mr. Woudbe is a member of our house, I believe; I think I have heard him speak very well—vastly well."

That Sir Solomon could not remember, for it had not happened—Mr. Woudbe not being a senator; but

the mistake added to the respectability of the Woudbe's ; it was therefore suffered to pass : and her ladyship proceeded."

" My poor friend ! we are deprived of the pleasure of her company by an indisposition brought on by this girl's abandoned conduct.

Rosa's person rose with her mind ! she looked down on the beautiful Countess.

" Mrs. Woudbe—Woudbe—sure I have heard enough of her to doubt her being so much affected at another person's conduct, who was never ashamed of her own ; sure your ladyship is quizzing all this while."

" Mrs. Feversham, I am shocked at you."

" I am sorry for that, my dear ; because you are then precisely in Mrs. Woudbe's situation ; feeling that concern for your friend, you have more need of for yourself."

" Lord ma'm, there is no talking to you."

" Then don't attempt it, my dear. But pray, my lady, what has this poor girl done, that has so affected Mrs. Woudbe ?"

Mrs. Feversham would talk right or wrong ; and when once she fancied herself attacked, as she called it, dealt her wit about with so little delicacy or respect to persons, that Lady Gauntlet was, strange to tell, a little embarrassed.

" I am really ashamed to say what she has done ;—but what would you say, Mrs. Feversham, if in a family like mine, a young person should absent herself, and pass the night under the roof of such a man as Lord Denningcourt ?"

" Say ! I declare I hardly know what I should say, more than what I before said on the same subject, that it would be very foolish."

" Would it not affect *you* ?"

" Not much for Miss Walsingham—"

" Walsingham ! Lord, ma'am, you really are too bad ; I dare say you know her name well enough."

" If she does," said Sir Solomon, " it is more than I do."

" Sir Solomon !" Lady Gauntlet was surprised.

" Uncle means her real name ; for tho' Colonel Bu-

hanun gave her leave to assume his, nobody but our village doctor knew that of her mother."

"Buhanun!" exclaimed Mrs. Feverham; "why sure this can't be! and yet—let me look at you, child;—yes, now I recollect it is—it must—there is not such another face in the world;—how could I forget it!—it is the little Beggar. Lord, I shall never forget, how like an angel I thought she looked when I saw her at Mount Pleasant; but how come you to change your name? that has a bad—a very bad look."

"A trifle," Lady Gauntlet said, "in comparison of other matters; but to expose the atrocity of her conduct, was only a proper penance for her own credulity, and an atonement for the little respect the countenancing her at all implied to the opinion of her good friend, Sir Solomon Mushroom."

That was the only part of the business at which Sir Solomon Mushroom was at all surprized; for as to the poor girl, what could be expected from her? she was taken from the lowest state of beggary, made a fine lady, and then deserted; the vices of her parents were natural and of consequence permanent; the airs of gentility acquired, and, of course, superficial;—he was sorry for her, but could not persuade persons of her ladyship's rank, and of Mrs. Woudbe's respectability, to countenance an unhappy creature of her description;—but perhaps, gentlemen, you will not object to a small collection for the poor girl—my one pound one is ready."

"By no means," cried the Major, jumping on his feet, and after tossing his guinea into his hat, handed it to Lord Delworth, who generously followed his example; and having also collected Sir Solomon's *one pound one*, he offered the magnificent aggregate to Rosa, who, without a trait of passion on her countenance calmly advised him to keep the money himself, as the foundation of a fund, to answer the future exigencies of his own family.

Lady Gauntlet, secure in her own prospects, answered this sarcasm with "Poor thing!"

"Have

"Have you any further commands for me, Lady Gauntlet?" said Rosa, without deigning to notice her pity.

"Are you pressed for time, Miss?—one visit a day is surely enough at that delightful castle;—consider, one may be surfeited with sweets."

"It may be for your Ladyship's interest to consider that; but if you have no further commands——"

Rosa had, with great innocence, made this stinging retort—Lady Gauntlet coloured.

Miss Mushroom was astonished at her assurance.

Madame Rosette, with the young ladies, withdrew; and the Rev. Mr. Brudenel was on his legs to turn the bold creature out of the room; but as Rosa was haughtily saving him any trouble, Lady Gauntlet called to her to stop, and bid him shut the door.

"I have yet so much compassion, so much, that I—I would prevent your utter ruin;—I have ordered my chaise to convey you the first stage towards London, and a servant to go with you still further—Your things are ready, I hear."

"A very handsome offer," cried Mrs. Feverham.

Her ladyship was too good, Miss Mushroom was sure.

Lady Gauntlet considered every body, the Rev. Mr. Brudenel said.

Sir Solomon wished she might not repent it; for his part, he knew enough of the disposition of such sort of wretches to expect insult for benefit.

Rosa was at first struck with the offer; and had not Lady Gauntlet's manner of speaking of her *poor friend*, and the occasion of her illness, steeled her heart, she might perhaps have allowed her part of the credit she gave herself; since, as the matter stood, her absence and stay at Denningcourt certainly wanted elucidation; and it was not an absurd conclusion, as she had perhaps been seen going towards Denningcourt park, that she had again visited the castle. But there was also another objection to her immediate removal from the neighbourhood; her heart was strongly bent on attending Elinor—the Duke's last words impelled her to hope she would be admitted into the family at the jointure-

house—he had promised she should hear from them ; and, in the present disposition of her mind, she would as soon have doubted holy writ as his word ;—nothing therefore could prevail on her to leave the neighbourhood till her fiat was pronounced from them.

“ Are you dumb, Miss ?” cried the Countess, rising with an excess of passion she could neither restrain nor conceal, though evidently wishing to do both.

“ No, madam,” replied Rosa ; “ I am willing to think you mean me a favour ; but——”

“ But what ! Your hankering is after your seducer—you will not accept my offer.”

“ Not to-night, madam.”

“ Not till you have apprised Lord Denningcourt ;—but you shall neither see nor send to him ; I will confine you—you shall live on bread and water, nor shall a creature in the house dare to speak to you.”

“ Confine me ! this is really such an outrageous defence of my honour, Lady Gauntlet, as, considering every thing, would alarm me, if I did not know you : I am not to learn, madam, that to confine me is more than you dare do.”

If Sir Solomon was in Lady Gauntlet’s situation, he would dare do any thing he pleased.

“ You have given me a noble proof of your daring already, Sir Solomon.”

“ How so, woman—what doest mean ?”

“ That you have done what no gentleman will dare to do—falsified your own word.”

“ ’Tis false ; my word is as good as the bank.”

“ Is it, Sir ? I thought you promised to protect me ; and there are those who know you might have kept that promise without injury to yourself.”

“ Lord, if ever I heard any thing to equal this !” said Miss Mushroom to her lover, in a tone of alarm—
“ I declare she is going to be impertinent to my uncle now.”

“ Let her take care,” roared Sir Solomon, in a voice that had often made Rosa tremble.

“ Well, the girl is really clever and spirited,” said Mrs. Feversham ; “ and the more I look at her, the more I think she resembles what I was a few years back ;

back; but come, child, Lady Gauntlet knows the world better than you or even me; remember the old chandler-woman, the watchmen, my ear-rings, and the caricature of a justice; there are such bodies all over the world; and you may chance to meet them where there are no Lord Denningcourt's; take my advice, accept the offer her ladyship makes."

Rosa thanked her; but added, as she was a stranger to every part of her situation, excepting the beggary of her origin, and the accident she alluded to, it was impossible for her to judge on the fit or unfit. "I am ready," she added, "to quit Delworth."

"And return to Denningcourt, abandoned wretch!"

"Dear madam," said Louisa, "what is it to us where she goes? we can only pity and advise her; if she be insensible and ungrateful, she will suffer; but why should our present happiness be sacrificed to her folly?"

Lord Delworth seconded his sister; and Miss Mushroom, with some difficulty, squeezed out a tear.

Lady Gauntlet's fine features re-assumed the aspect of placid goodness: she embraced her future daughter-in-law, asked the pardon of the company, and even apologized to her children; but insisted nevertheless, that Rosa should not be suffered to stir, at least till Mrs. Woudbe discharged her.

"Mrs. Woudbe!" repeated Rosa; "she declined to see me, and can have no business."

"No business! were you not entrusted with her jewels?"

"Jewels! does she charge *me* with any breach of that trust?"

Lady Gauntlet had gone further than she intended.

"It is, however, proper she should discharge you."

"Nothing more so," Sir Solomon said; "and if she made any more words about the matter, he was of the quorum, and he, or indeed my Lord, if he acted, might commit her."

"Commit me, Sir!"

"Yes, madam, to prison—the county gaol—wherever that is."

"Can you, Sir? then God help me; for I am sure you *will*."

Rosa had hitherto borne up with spirit; but though she had never been more sensible of the support of conscious innocence, the last fit frightened her: the idea of standing quite alone in the world, at the mercy of Sir Solomon Mushroom, Mrs. Woudbe, and their sort, and at last, perhaps, be sent to prison, was too much: she endeavoured to conceal her emotion, as she slowly retreated from the presence she was beginning to fear, when a servant entered, breathless with haste and surprise, to announce the Duke of Athelane.

The Countess, guilt struck, leaned back in her chair—forgetting, in that moment, the Duke of Athelane she feared, had no longer the power to confront her.

Lady Louisa, who was perfectly well-bred, advanced with Lord Delworth to the Duke.

Mrs. Feversham was all eyes, Sir Solomon all bows, and Miss Mushroom resumed her flowers.

Rosa was near the door, gazing with anxious hope at the Duke, whose figure, as he passed her, looked more than mortal; but when the first compliments were over, Sir Solomon and his party, Mr. Brudenel and Lady Louisa introduced, and every body seated, finding herself still standing unnoticed, or even seeming to be seen, she retreated nearer the door—her heart flowing from her eyes.

With Lady Gauntlet's recollection, her easy eloquence returned; she complimented the Duke, inquired after the ladies of the family, and was all again the graceful, infatuating Countess of Gauntlet.

In this moment, to the surprise of more than one of the party, Mrs. Woudbe entered in an elegant dishabille: she had really fretted herself ill; but having no particular disease, she could not lie in bed all day and all night, and her own company was terrible; but as nobody chose to share the insupportable burthen with her, and as she heard the Duke of Athelane was in the drawing-room, she resolved to join the company, secretly exclaiming, "Oh! if I had my dear jewels again, I would think no more of the traitor."

The invalid brushed by Rosa with tolerable face, considering her weak state; and Sir Solomon immediately

diately resigned his chair to the wife of the man of immense fortune.

The Duke, after a pause, confessed himself at a loss to apologize for intruding on Lady Gauntlet a visit so out of all order.

The Duke of Athelane, Lady Gauntlet said, could never be an intruder.

Again the Duke paused.

“ You have heard, Lady Gauntlet, I presume, how much we are all affected by the indisposition of a young relation.”

“ Certainly, my Lord Duke,” said Mrs. Feverham, full of self-collection, and proud of the ease with which she could speak to a nobleman of the first rank, even when not spoken to, “ every body has heard of poor Lady Denningcourt’s misfortune ; and as every body knows she is one of the very best women in the world, why every body pities her monstrously. I suppose you have had Doctor Willis ?”

“ Now,” joined Mrs. Woudbe, “ I think I should prefer Monro ; you know he attends bedlam, and therefore—”

The Duke was thunderstruck ; he wished to have kept the unhappy malady a profound secret ; and having commanded the domestics to be dumb on the matter, concluded they were so—as to the heads of the family, they were not to be doubted ;—but here were incontrovertible proofs, that it had furnished chit chat for half the idlers of the age, and would certainly, even if Elinor was cured, be either an impediment to his grand plan, or a disgrace to it ; he could not immediately recover this painful conviction, and therefore did not answer.

Lady Gauntlet, who was the essence of fine breeding, was as much shocked at the vulgar forwardness of both ladies as the Duke himself, but could not, without adopting their manners, apologise for them.

After a short silence, the Duke addressed Mrs. Woudbe :—you have a young lady under your protection, madam, who is the motive of my intrusion on Lady Gauntlet.”

“Walsingham,” Mrs. Woudbe presumed, vainly endeavouring to conceal her confusion under an air of haughty contempt.

“My dear Woudbe,” cried Lady Gauntlet, in a tone of consolation, “do not let it affect you—think of her as she deserves; you have been too good—she worthless and ungrateful—there is nothing so extraordinary in either case.”

Extraordinary! no, Sir Solomon thought, with humble submission to his Grace, nothing was more common; for his part, he scarce ever remembered doing a charitable act, without having dirt thrown in his teeth for it, which was the reason why he had left off charity.

The Duke looked both disgusted and surprised. “I shall be extremely disappointed,” said he, “if I am to understand, by all this, that the young lady’s conduct has wounded the sensibility of her patroness, and provoked so dirty a philippic against one of the cardinal virtues from that gentleman.”

Nobody better understood the dangerous weapon of irony than Lady Gauntlet; and though extremely vulnerable to its wound, and nicely sensible to its attack, the constant guard on her feelings never betrayed her secret vexation. The cause of her friend was now her own; and without affecting to have heard what had passed, she directed the brilliant, yet melting languor of her fine eyes, to the Duke.

“Mrs. Woudbe, my Lord, was so attached to this unworthy——”

“She really is unworthy, then?”

“As she has been an inmate of my house, under the roof with my daughters, and often my companion, though never theirs, I am ashamed to say how much so.”

Miss Mushroom’s hint now sent Lord Delworth across the room to inform Rosa she might retire—he supposed the Countess would send for her when she was wanted; but though he waited a moment, she neither answered nor took his hint.

The Duke’s looks betrayed his chagrin; Mrs. Woudbe understood her cue was to affect sensibility, and took out her handkerchief; Lady Gauntlet darted

an indignant glance at the stubborn Rosa, who kept her station undismayed.

"I am," said the Duke, "in a very delicate predicament. The young person was, we find, a juvenile friend of our young relation: she passed Lady Denningcourt's house, we think, by accident; Miss Athelane saw and recollected her;—we expected, after a composing medicine, which the gentleman who attends her thought necessary, she would have forgotten the incident; but we find, what we consider as a very favourable omen, her recollection quite clear: she calls incessantly for her friend; and really I was so much prepossessed——"

"You have seen her, Duke?"

"The incident was so sudden and unexpected, it affected them both so much, there was no avoiding that; but though I must confess her manner and person struck me so much——"

Mrs. Feverham did not wonder at that; it struck every body.

"There are certain delicacies in our situation," resumed the Duke, "which render an inquiry into her character and connections necessary, before we can resolve to indulge our dear invalid."

His good grace was perfectly right, Sir Solomon said;—caution in such case was the proof of wisdom. The ladies, he added, were tender; but for his part, he thought it incumbent on every man of *character* to be frank, and therefore he must take the liberty to be their orator on this occasion. The girl's character was notorious, and her connection such, as it would not surprise him to hear had lightened the sideboard.

The Duke was astonished. "But how," said he, "could such a person get introduced to Lady Gauntlet?"

Her ladyship arose: she had some fine exotics in an adjoining apartment, which she wished to shew his Grace.

The Duke also arose, and was leading her towards the door, when Rosa rushed forward—the colour of her complexion varying with every breath.

The Countess would have passed, but the Duke made an involuntary stop.

"Lord

“ Lord, if ever I saw any thing so bold and impertinent in my life !” cried Miss Charlotte.

Lady Louisa conceiving her mother insulted, whispered Mr. Brudenel, who immediately insisted on Rosa’s quitting the presence of the Countess ; but had he spoken in thunder, she would neither have heard nor regarded it.

“ I adjure you, Sir,” said she, addressing the Duke, “ by the honour which, I am sure, is in you more than lip-deep, to hear all that can be said of me in my own presence, and let me answer for myself.”

“ Well, I love her spirit,” cried Mrs. Feverham ; “ it is so like my own.”

“ ’Tis an evil spirit, and ought to be laid,” cried the Major.

“ Will your Grace do me the honour to see my exotics ;” and the Countess extended the white hand he had relinquished.

“ Stop, Sir,” said Rosa ; “ I once more adjure you, as one of the inestimable props on which the fine harmony of social justice depends : I do not now wish to avail myself of the favourable sentiments you professed for me when we parted ; I no longer implore you to gain me admission under Lady Denningcourt’s roof : I am the offspring of a beggar—an outcast ; let the obloquy of my origin glare on every event of my existence ; let me meet the contempt of little minds, and endure the hardships of that poverty which is my birth-right ; but no longer let me be loaded with guilt, from which my soul is free ; attach not crimes to the name of beggar, which those of a superior rank only dare commit with impunity. Too long have my feelings been lacerated by the injustice of those who despise the beggary they want you to relieve ; too long has patient endurance, and the hope that travels with us through life, sanctioned the calumny which pursues me. I have heard myself accused on prejudice, and condemned on surmise ; but I appeal from vulgar error, from misrepresentations and persecution, to a nobleman, in whom I will believe, that honour and nobility are synonymous—not for favour, but justice. If I be proved only unfortunate, I cannot fear admission to the jointure-house, for Lady Denningcourt’s is the
asylum

asylum of the miserable; if guilty, I am unworthy of breathing the same atmosphere with her;—by my own actions, such as they have been, I am ready to stand or fall.”

“We shall see,” cried Mrs. Feversham.

The Duke’s eyes were rivetted on the animated speaker. “I wish,” said he, “you may be wronged, though I must hope this company incapable of false accusation.”

“Will your Grace see the exotics?”

The Duke hesitated. “What have *you* to say?” turning from Lady Denningcourt to Rosa.

“What I have before said, Sir,—that I desire, I demand, to hear the answers to those enquiries, it certainly becomes you to make, into my character and connections. One virtuous lady is too much affected to speak out; another, after charging me with indelicate and criminal irregularities in the presence of her own amiable daughters, requires to be alone with a *gentleman*, while she relates my enormities; and Sir Solomon Mushroom asserts, to my face, that my character is notorious. Well; my Lord, you see every body is silent; have I your leave to be my own accuser?”

“There is a witchcraft about you I cannot resist; but (and the Duke led her towards his own chair) I must not suffer a lady to stand, while one gentleman keeps his seat.” Yet, with all his politeness, there stood the divine the beautiful Countess, who, deserted by a man of quality, found herself in a situation perfectly new.

The Duke recollected himself; he reconducted Lady Gauntlet to her seat.

“Then you will not see my exotics, Duke?”

“I confess myself spell-bound;—this is an extraordinary girl; is it not possible your ladyship may be mistaken in her? she must be very good, or very bad;—with such a mind and person there can be no medium.”

“Lady Gauntlet *is* mistaken, my Lord; but admitting she was not, if I were the unhappy creature she suspects, should not that rather entitle me to compassion?”

“Not when you avow your guilt, and glory in it.”

“I have

"I have done neither."

"No! not acknowledged being at Denningcourt castle all night, when my servants were dispatched every where in search of you."

"How!" said the Duke—"can this be true?"

Rosa answered, "it is my Lord," with what Miss Mushroom declared was the most unheard-of effrontery

"At the castle! with Denningcourt! then indeed I fear you cannot be wronged. But has he not a woman there?"

This was too fair an opportunity for Mrs. Feversham to let pass; she could take on her to say, that, to her certain knowledge, and she was seldom deceived, Lord Denningcourt had fallen desperately in love with Miss Walsingham the very first time he had seen her.

"In love!" repeated Lady Gauntlet, scornfully.

"True as fate, my Lady;—and really, when I heard he had deserted my dear friend Miss Mushroom——"

"Deserted!" repeated Miss Mushroom, colouring with vexation.

"Bless me," continued Mrs. Feversham, "sure there is an echo here. You know, my dear, he did desert you; but you could not help that, nor he neither, perhaps. I really thought when I heard it, and that he had got a mistress with him at his old castle, it was Miss Walsingham; which, as she is so beautiful, you know, my Lord, was the most natural thing in the world."

"You give me up, Sir, I see," said Rosa; "but I warn you against hasty conclusions. In respect to this castle, and this Lord, I shall come purified out of the fire."

As Lady Gauntlet had her own unanswerable reasons for believing that impossible, she had great pleasure in observing a degree of settled incredulity in the Duke's looks.

"But," continued Rosa, "as, when I shewed your ladyship the letter, which proved how I was imposed on, and for what infamous purpose——"

To her utter astonishment, Lady Gauntlet protested the girl was mad—actually mad; she had never shewn her any paper or letter to that or any other purport.

Rosa's

Rosa's hands and eyes were uplifted.

"None of your grimaces," roared Sir Solomon ;
"I shall be obliged to commit you at last."

"Let us take care not to commit ourselves, Sir," said the Duke, gravely ; "we must not intimidate even a guilty pannel on trial."

"Mrs. Woudbe, I do not expect you will accuse yourself ; but sure you won't deny certain letters ?"

Mrs. Woudbe did deny the whole story, and defied Rosa to produce a single voucher.

Rosa's colour and her countenance fell : the vouchers were indeed out of her power, as she had returned them all.

The Duke's fine open brow was fast curling into austere severity. "This," said he, "is trifling and absurd ; and what could it benefit you to prove your protectress an ill woman ? her vices would not excuse yours."

"No, to be sure," joined Mrs. Feverham ; "the same sense that enabled you to discover the faults of others should certainly assist you to correct your own."

The Duke gave Mrs. Feverham a glance of approbation, of which she was so proud, she repeated the same sentences twice over without stopping.

"The end I expected it to answer, Sir, was not to expose the lady you call my protectress, but to prove, that instead of being discarded as a person who disgraced her employers, I was only solicitous not to be disgraced by them ; though, as the ladies are witnesses for each other, and I have certainly resigned all the——No"—and a glow of deep crimson covered her face—"no, I have not resigned *all* the vouchers—here is one ;" and she produced the letter she had received from the house-maid. "This, I presume, does not belong to *you*, Madam—it is addressed to *me*."

"Mrs. Woudbe forgot her invalid state, and rushed to seize the letter ;—"Yes," said she, almost stifled with her joyful emotion, "it is, it is mine—give it me."

"Is it not addressed to me ?" answered Rosa coldly, putting it into the Duke's hand.

"Dear Miss Walsingham, but you know it is for me ; it is, it is—Oh give it to me."

Lady

Lady Gauntlet was confounded for her friend—she would have whispered a different conduct—but besides the Duke's, every other eye was fixed on them. An exposure of Mrs. Woudbe was now inevitable; but, as the Duke justly observed, as that would not exonerate Rosa from the first charge; and as, in her opinion, nothing else could, she had nothing for it but to be surpris'd at Mrs. Woudbe, and let her sink or swim, as her good or evil genius preponderated.

“Many of these letters, I believe madam,” resumed Rosa, “you will not now deny came through my hands, from a distressed man—your *natural brother*.”

“No matter, the letter is *mine*—give it to me.”

“Stay, madam, I think it will be of consequence to me, that some person should peruse this letter on my behalf.—Will you, my Lord, have so much charity?”

“First let me know what end the reading is to answer.”

“None in the world, dear Duke,” cried Mrs. Woudbe, “but to ruin me.—Would you, Miss Walsingham, wish that? What good would it do you to ruin me?”

“I might have asked you the same question, madam, a few moments since.”

“I cannot understand this business, ladies,” said the Duke gravely; “here seems to be a secret not too honourable, either in the concealment, or discovery. I must beg leave to return the letter; I am by no means expert in the developement of intrigues, and cannot take so curved a mean to discover what it cannot import me to know.”

“Have a moment's patience, Sir,” said Rosa, rather hastily, “if you be come here to make enquiries about my character and connections, every thing must import you in which either is implicated. I am accused of irregularity—to that I plead so far guilty, as that it is to you alone I will condescend to vindicate myself.”

“Now that is wrong, very wrong in you,” cried Mrs. Feverham, “because we who are not of the secret, not hearing your justification—”

“You

" You have heard me accused, madam, of occasioning Mrs. Woudbe ill-rest, by the enormity of my conduct."

" Certainly, my dear, I must have been deaf else."

" And you also heard me advert to a letter I shewed Lady Gauntlet, which—"

" She denied—good."

" Then pray, my Lord Duke, have the goodness to read that letter."

" Pray, pray don't my Lord Duke!—Miss Walsingham, I acknowledge every thing—I deceived you in respect to the person by whom the letters were wrote, which came to me under your cover.—I beseech you, my Lord Duke, let me have my letter."

" Did I not by accident discover the infamous advantage you took of my ignorance, in such iniquitous practices."

" I certainly confided a case of papers to your care, one of which you have read;—Surely I am humbled enough—I entreat his Grace will let me have my letter; it is of the last importance to me."

" One word more;—do you believe I shewed Lady Gauntlet the letter you allude to?"

" I believe—I think—"

" Are you not certain that I did?"

" How can I can be sure of what I did not see?"

" Well, madam, when I sent you the box with its scandalous contents, I wrote a note with it; I would not ask the Duke to degrade himself by reading the paper of such importance to you, if I could convince him I am not unworthy the confidence of Lady Denningcourt without it.—Give his Grace that note."

" Lady Gauntlet, dear Lady Gauntlet,—you—"

Lady Gauntlet had listened with internal rage, while her features only expressed curiosity.

Mrs. Woudbe, who had no doubt this letter from her *natural brother*, accounted for his silence, and that all her suspense would be ended the moment it came into her hands, thought no sacrifice too great to obtain it; while her friend and confidant, who neither expected nor hoped any thing about the matter, was
enraged

enraged at her committing herself, and more so at involving her, in so evident a disgrace.

"I am astonished, madam," said she, with great haughtiness, "you can appeal to me on so ridiculous a business;—I know little of your affairs, and less of your correspondence; if you have improper secrets, and your confidant have betrayed them, I beg I may not be implicated—my honour—"

"Nay, Lady Gauntlet, if you go to that, and talk of honour, I might perhaps, have as much to—"

"I entreat, Ladies," said the Duke, "you will not traverse the scene of Brutus and Cassius,—you are both honourable Ladies, no doubt; but if my little Daniel here could bring herself so well off about her nocturnal visits at Denningcourt castle, I should be tempted to run away with her."

"She has turned the tables, indeed my Lord," cried Mrs. Feversham, "if confidence on one side and confusion on the other, can do it; but for my part, I like a little ocular demonstration, and think that the note or the letter ought to be produced, *pro bono publico*;—what say you Sir Solomon?"

Sir Solomon had seen through the whole business from the beginning; but as Rosa was an innocent person, whom having injured, he could never forgive, it was but natural he should seize with avidity every possible means of punishing her for reminding him of what he found convenient to forget, by remaining among the sons and daughters of men; and his mortification was always in proportion, when she slipped unhurt through his fingers.

Mrs. Feversham's "what say you Sir Solomon?" was like many other of her sayings, rather ill-timed; the knight not knowing well what answer he ought to make, consistent with his profound respect for the lady of the mansion, fixed on that the most opposite to her sentiments, and inimical to their mutual interest.—"To be sure; after so much said on both sides, proof was what every body expected."

Rosa, in the mean while, struck at what the Duke said respecting her nocturnal visits to the castle, could not help admitting that the elucidation of so suspicious
a cir-

a circumstance ought to be as public as the occasion;—but Kattie! must she sacrifice the hope of seeing her restored to society! of concealing her frailty; and changing the artful seducer into the honourable protector:—besides, had she not solemnly promised,—and could she break a promise, made to the distressed child of her reverend and lamented friend?—but was there no medium? would no reservation be accepted?—she might however try.

During Rosa's reverie, Miss Mushroom having hinted to Lord Delworth, that all this vile profling was vastly insipid, and he being of her opinion, they arose, arm in arm, to leave the apartment.

The Major, who never had an opinion of his own, nor adopted that of another without some new oath, swore he was as tired as nineteen devils, and made one step across the room to join them; Mr. Brudenel was also on the move; but Lady Louisa, who knew more of her mother's real disposition than any other of her children, sat still, in painful expectation of an unpleasant ending to so extraordinary a scene.

Rosa had by this time made up her mind; she entreated the moving party would be seated one moment, in a manner so gently persuasive, that although Miss Mushroom put up her under lip with “at her request, indeed! well, that was a famous joke,” she permitted herself to be led back to her seat; and while the rest of the company found their attention attracted by Rosa, resumed her bouquet.

“I am going to try whether you will be tempted, my Lord, to run away with me,” said Rosa, with a smile, “as you threatened, if I could explain the mystery of the castle.—You know there is an unhappy female resident there?”

“Of whom the Earl,” Lady Gauntlet said, “was heartily tired.”

“It was a dreadful night, my Lord, and I was sheltered from the storm, with a friend, where few in this company would chuse to go by day-light—where indeed I was forced myself.”

“A riddle-me-ree,” cried Mrs. Feverham.

“It

"It was in the mausoleum of the family of the Denningcourts."

"But you had *a friend with you*;" and Lady Gauntlet tried to look into her soul.

"I had, madam; and perhaps Sir Solomon Mushroom would be more clear of comprehension, if I said, part of a friend; it was that honest cripple, Sir Solomon, John Brown, who was turned out of his own house by his own servant;—you remember John Brown, Sir Solomon."

"My stars!" cried Mrs. Feversham,—“what the old landlord of the White Horse, is he alive after all? why I declare I should not be more surprised if his old master was to pop in among us one of these days.”

Sir Solomon had a sick qualm;—the last two persons in the world he wished to meet, had been brought to the same point in the most unfortunate moment, and, in all likelihood, leagued together ever since; and to finish the climax, a suggestion, a bare suggestion that his master might also be raised from the dead, overspread his rosy face with a pale purple.—“You talk like a mad woman, Mrs. Feversham,” said he peevishly.

“Like a simpleton, you mean, Sir Solomon; for to be sure the old Colonel has been food for the worms long ago;—but pray is the poor man really a cripple? has he lost his legs, arms, eyes, or——”

“Only one leg.”

“No more!—Lord, I thought by your talk, he had been half gone;—and pray what is become of his wife?”

“And his sons and daughters, uncles and aunts, and grandmothers?” cried Lord Delworth; “do, Miss Walsingham, tell Mrs. Feversham all about it.”

Mrs. Feversham was up —“As to uncles and aunts and grandmothers, she could say nothing to his Lordship about them, but it was her opinion, the sons and daughters of certain people would not dash much in the next century.”

“Lord, how ill-natured,”—cried Miss Mushroom.

“And why not?” asked Sir Solomon.

“If

"If Mrs. Feversham will give us leave," said Lady Gauntlet, "we will go back to the mausoleum."

"There, madam, amid old and new coffins, mouldering bones, and mementos of recent mortality, I met——"

"Not Lord Denningcourt," Mr. Brudenel was sure.

"No, Sir, it was only his mistress, of whom it seems, he is, *heartily tired*."

"Does any body know any thing of her?" asked Lady Louisa.

"One of his old Jermyn-street cronies," the Major dare to say.

"This Lady," Rosa dared say, "was never in Jermyn-street in her life."

Miss Mushroom wondered what she could be doing among coffins, and such things; it was vastly odd.

"She was kneeling ma'am."

"At prayers, quite a Magdalene," Lord Delworth supposed.

"I knew her, my Lord, when she was the pride of her respectable family, the toast of the men, the—shall I say—envy or admiration of the women, Ladies? it shall be as you please."

"The envy, to be sure," Mrs. Feversham said; "one as naturally followed the other as B followed A in the alphabet."

"Lord, what does she mean?" cried Miss Mushroom.

"I knew *her*, my Lord, and she knew *me*, though both our circumstances were a little altered; I was not, indeed, in my rusty black habit; but she was all mourning, external and internal,—she was leaning on a small coffin."

"Oh how vastly shocking," cried Miss Mushroom.

"You was witness, my Lord, to an unexpected meeting between two young friends, in Denningcourt-park, but cannot from thence have an idea of that in the mausoleum; for there was more than a derangement of intellect to mourn,—it was the irreparable loss of honour which mingled the tears of a Magdalene with the anguish of a mother."

"My

"My little Daniel," said the Duke, tears in his eyes.

"Pray, my Lord, give me my letter," cried Mrs. Woudbe.

"Never mind your letter, I will write you fifty on all sorts of subjects, do let us hear the finish of the story; I am vastly fond of hearing that pretty creature talk,—one never thinks of her rusty black habit,—and she is so like what I was a few years since.

"Then you really was not at the castle, after all."

What casuist could account for the change in Lady Gauntlet's voice and manner, at this moment?

"I beg your pardon, Lady Gauntlet,—I was.—"

"Well," and Lady Gauntlet was tempted, like the Duke, to call her a strange girl,—“why did you not tell me all this?”

"Ah madam! why did you desert your own character?"

"I may have been deceived;—but what followed?"

"What followed is the secret of the prison-house, which, even if I should not reveal till I have but one auditor, I see the Duke will run away with me to Denningcourt, and I will run away with him all over the world."

"I hope—I hope," said the Duke,—“I hope I am not in love with you—not foolishly in love;—but you do with me what you will."

"My letter, dear Duke,"—said Mrs. Woudbe.

"It is addressed to *you*, my little Daniel."

"I disclaim it."

"But you should know what you disclaim."

"Oh, Miss Walsingham! forgive, and do not ruin me;—read it yourself."

Had a viper stung Rosa she could not have started with more abhorrence.

"John Brown could tell you," said Mrs. Feversham, "what an excellent clerk I am, Miss Walsingham;—shall I read it?"

"What does Mrs. Woudbe say?"

"I think," said the Duke, "the proposal is, like the lady, clever,—and if she will read it, and ascertain,

tain, if called on, as much of the contents as will clear your honour on any future occasion—”

What! did Mrs. Feverham hear right? had she, whom every body delighted to humble,—she who loved civil things so well, and had so few said to her! had she been thought clever,—which was next to handsome—by one of the first and most respected peers in the country; how delightful? how absolutely intoxicating!—She nodded at the Duke,—squeezed Rosa’s hand—and put the letter into her lock pocket-book.

“And now, my little Daniel, you will trust me with the charming Countess and her exotics, while you make your toilette; for I am anxious to introduce you to your new patroness with every advantage.”

Rosa burst into tears.

“How is this, madam?”

“Joy, my Lord, all joy!—I feel as if at last—at last I was going home:—It is indeed a long lost dear-loved friend I am to see,—but that is not all, my heart,—I can never describe the sensations of my heart;—it is now in harmony with every living creature.—Lady Gauntlet, I just now recollect when you delivered me from that vile Lord Lowder, and thank you for all your kindness—Mrs. Woudbe, I wish you may deserve to be happy.—Sir Solomon, you are my oldest acquaintance: I wish I could remember something to thank you for.—Lord Delworth, may you and your fair bride be happy—Major, you will certainly die of ennui when I am gone.—Mrs. Feverham, if ever I have a house of my own, I will remember the asylum you gave me in yours.—To Lady Louisa and Mr. Brudenel she had not been introduced, and therefore only courtied respectfully.—And now, my Lord, I will be ready in six minutes.”

The Duke seriously requested a private audience of the Countess. Rosa skipped up to her garret,—but her wardrobe was removed back into the chamber she had before occupied, and she had not, in the flutter of her joy, changed dress when she was joined by the Countess.

“I could not let you go, Miss Walsingham, without wishing you well and happy; the many changes
that

that will soon take place in my affairs, render it probable we may never meet again. I wish I could explain to you the secret cause of every thing that has occurred, as far as concerns myself, but it cannot be.—What, therefore, I have further to say, concerns yourself only,—you remember when you made me the confidant of your attachment to Mr. Montreville.—”

“ Oh Lady Gauntlet ! how can you wish me happy, and name that man ? why should his unworthy idea be conjured up at such a moment as this ? ”

“ Only to remind you of what I then hinted.—I know the inference ; you will ask how I can justify myself to myself, for being the confidant of such secrets.—To this I answer, the world is a school of experience, in which you are not yet initiated ; and though one may lament other times, one must accommodate oneself to the present.”

“ Ah, how happy am I that I am going where no accommodations of that sort are necessary.”

“ How do you know ? ”

“ I have been informed on the best authority.”

“ What ! by the Duke ?—may not relations be partial ? ”

“ He would not be unjust ;—but it is not from him I learn the worth of the lady to whom I shall be introduced ; it is from those endowments you shewed me the first time I saw Denningcourt, and from my own feelings, which tell me I shall never leave her.”

“ Had you not the same feelings when you came to me.”

“ No, madam ;—I had the wish, but not the presentiment, that your favour would be permanent.”

“ You have that presentiment now ? ”

“ Perfectly ! entire ! ”

“ Well, Miss Walsingham, I see you are ready, and the Duke’s carriage waits to make amends for that ugly phantom I raised to disturb you.—I frankly tell you, that your ideas of Lady Denningcourt can never be too high raised ; you will find her all you think, and all you wish ;—but beware of Denningcourt.”

“ I fear nothing,” cried Rosa, exultingly ; “ I, as well as the happy ladies I saw to day, shall be under
Lady

Lady Denningcourt's roof, and protected by the Duke of Athelane.—Adieu Countess."

The adieu was returned.—Rosa flew down, positively refusing to take with her a single thing presented to her by either of her late patronesses. The Duke viewed her with parental delight; she scarce touched the footstep,—the carriage drove off, and she bid farewell to Delworth.

C H A P. XI.

The Beggar proved to be like somebody; becomes useful; and, like the Heroines of all other famous Novels, carries a nostrum in her looks, to put M.D's. out of practice.

LADY Gauntlet having made the Duke acquainted with such of the leading traits in Rosa's story, as she recollected herself; which, considering the interest she appeared to take in it, was all fine acting, could not be very clear. He was prepared for that increase of confidence, which even in the short ride from Delworth to Denningcourt Jointure-house, our heroine frankly offered, and he as frankly accepted.

"Well!" said the Duke, "you are now returning where you was so desirous to remain."

"I feel I am," replied Rosa:—"nay, I am in imagination already there."

"Indeed! and what happens?"

"Every thing happy; I embrace my Elinor; she knows me, and her amendment is evident; Lady Denningcourt, just in the same sweet voice as she spoke to you, is rejoiced; she is kind to me; bids me take comfort to my heart, and no longer consider myself as an unhappy wanderer."

"All this may be realized without a miracle; but though I profess myself an enemy to disguise, which, in general, is only a cover to low cunning and dishonesty."

honest chicane, there are reasons, not necessary at present to explain, why I wish you to retain your assumed name; that of Buhanun, will make no friend in the family of Athelane."

The scene at the London Inn, that instant recurred to her recollection; not, however, with the prejudices of Elinor:—it was not to be thought a woman of Lady Denningcourt's exemplary character, could ever have descended to intrigue with a married man, and one twice her age:—and she was too certain, both of the honour and moral rectitude of Major Buhanun, to suspect him of a criminal attachment:—a mystery, however, there certainly was, attached to the transaction, in which both him and his name were implicated; she was silent and thoughtful.

"I have a prescience," continued the Duke, "you are not quite satisfied with this arrangement; but the motives for the change on your side still exist:—mine you will know, sooner or later, as you rise or fall in my estimation."

"But Lady Hopely! she already knows."—

"No matter, she is in my secret, and prepared to remember or forget you, according to the result of my visit at Delworth:—your judgment, I believe, is good, and when proofs are added to belief, you will have liberty to regulate your own conduct; in the mean time I may tell you, that though I still see the resemblance I spoke of this afternoon, your voice, your mouth, and a dimpled smile about it, reminds me strongly of Lady Denningcourt; but, by a coincidence of natural effects, which it would puzzle a logician to define, that likeness is blended with a strong cast of him you call your first patron."

"Of Colonel Buhanun:—did you know him, sir? I have indeed been told I resembled him."

"Indeed! and by whom, pray?"

"One who knew him well; one whose memory I revere; Major Buhanun."

"Ay, *he* did know him, and so did I—too well!"—

"Too well! sir! could any body know so good a man too well!"

The Duke was silent, but after a pause—"So the Major thought you like his nephew?"

"So like, he would at first, and indeed at times I believe to the last, think I was his daughter."

"And how are you sure he was mistaken?"

"Oh very sure; I had almost said too sure, since my mother is yet alive."

"And in indigence?"

"No, thank God.—I remember nothing of my father; but have lately seen my mother in good circumstances, and married to a second husband."

"Go on," said the Duke, listening with earnest attention.

"I discovered her by accident:—if it was natural sympathy impelled her to be kind to me, it was unhappily not reciprocal; I am afraid I am to blame; I knew my mother, but my heart did not acknowledge her:—she had an accident: I felt the duty, but not the affection of a child; and to this hour she is ignorant that her nurse was her deserted daughter."

"Your story, my little Daniel," said the Duke, "is full of interest; and I never saw the Jointure-House portico with less pleasure, than at this moment:—but I am always in the library at six in the morning; you must meet me there, and tell me all about this mother."

The carriage having turned through a double row of venerable oaks, to the road in front of the house, stopped at a grand, well-lighted entrance, where Lady Hopely was looking out for the carriage.

"Is it you, Duke?" said she, "and you have a companion too! then I am not disgraced by fighting her battles, after she left Edinburgh so suddenly, and as some would believe, in such gay company.—She is a good girl, or you would not have brought her."

"Such as she is, Lady Hopely, I am pleased to call her my protégée, and beg you will have the goodness to introduce her as such to your friends."

"Your's! your protégée? delightful! this is an event exactly in my own way; no mortal can comprehend it:—but come, my dear, the Duke will follow: has he warned you not to say naughty words?"

you must forget you ever heard the name of Buhanun; to mention it before an Athelane, is a deadly sin, out of benefit of clergy."

Again Rosa thought of the adventure at the Inn.

"Come," continued Lady Hopely, feeling her hand tremble—"courage; if we be of importance to you, you are no less so to us: the peace of an amiable woman may be restored by your means; if you succeed, we will hail you as the Thane of Athelane."

A door was thrown open, where the Countess with Miss Angus and her constant shadow Miss Bruce, were seated.

"My dear Countess," said Lady Hopely, "I bring you the Duke's *protégée*; I am vastly sorry for the poor man, he is already in his dotage; and though it certainly is a puzzle how a lassie he likes, I like, and you *will* like, came to be dropped among the folks at Delworth, yet he pretends he has unravelled it."

The Duke entered, and was leading Rosa towards the Countess; when, to her confusion and mortification, she beheld the fine alabaster of her complexion, change to vivid paleness; her smooth brow curved, as if drawn by convulsion; and such a hollow eager cast in her eyes, as she gazed on her face, as totally routed all the sanguine visions hope had raised.

"Like me!" exclaimed Lady Denningcourt, in a deep half groan.

"Dear Elinor," whispered the Duke, "I thought it would strike you, but did not expect you would be so much affected:—come, be yourself then, (in a raised voice;) Lady Denningcourt, I have the honour to present Miss Wallingham—Miss Angus, Miss Bruce, my *protégée*."

Rosa was confused and agitated; her heart palpitating to agony, and swelling to suffocation, she could scarce support herself; and when, with a sensation more tender than joy, more intoxicating than pleasure, she felt the cold trembling lip of Lady Denningcourt press her burning cheek, she fell senseless at her feet.

"Like me!" repeated the Countess, raising her eagerly.

"Why

“Why really, now you mention it,” cried Lady Hopely, with vivacity, “she *is* like you: I was struck with her features the first time I saw her; and now—oh yes, it *is* you she resembles,—but we frightened her: Miss Angus, do, my dear, convince Miss Walsingham she is not absolutely hideous; Margaret Bruce stares, as if she had found out something too—Well, child, what is the discovery? don’t you perceive, from the tip of Miss Walsingham’s ear, to the dimple in her chin, a likeness to *somebody* you know?”

Whether Miss Bruce understood or not, she blushed, but followed Miss Angus’s lead in complimenting Rosa; and as Lady Denningcourt’s earnest and unremitting, though silent observations on her person, became more composed, till all the unpleasant emotions of surprise gradually changed to a placid wonder, which was no restraint on her native goodness of heart, our heroine felt that she was indeed at home.

The Duke had already seen the doctor in private; and as it was, in his opinion, best to defer the meeting of the young friends till morning, Rosa obtained a reluctant permission to retire early, on account of the fatigues she had undergone during the last night and day. Miss Angus and Miss Bruce obligingly accompanied her to her chamber; the former offering her woman to assist her to undress; Rosa, smiling, answered, “she had always been used to be her own *femme de chambre*,” a most astonishing thing in Miss Bruce’s opinion; so astonishing, that when they returned to the saloon, she communicated it to the company. They, however, were too much interested in communications of another sort, to attend to her. The Duke was relating to them what had passed at Delworth; Lady Hopely could not, without adverting to painful subjects, relate particulars of her former knowledge of the heroine of the tale, but said, “she knew her to be an uncommonly charming character.”

Lady Denningcourt, pleased at such welcome addition to her family, thanked the Duke for the pains he had taken, and retired to rest, elated with the hope of seeing that health, mental and personal, on which

her own depended, restored by means of the amiable stranger.

Rosa's last waking meditation, was on Lady Denningcourt; and after thanking heaven, with all the fervency of contented gratitude, for the providence of the day, she sunk into rest so profound, that it was not till Mrs. Betty Brown opened the window shutters, and pulled up the curtains, at eight the next morning, that she awoke.

"Well, Miss Rosy," cried Betty, "here you be—who but you; and who'd a thought you'd been turned out one minit, and fotch't back the next by his Grace himself; for my part, I think there's reason in roasting of heggs;—and the butler ses, too, as our lady did nothen in the world but stare at you all supper time; and he ses you looked very toll loll; and so, I dare say, you did; but I bag of oll love, you won't think of calling me "Betty;" because you see, Miss, I have told our folks in the stuart's room, as I kept a ouse of my own; and, you see, they'll certainly think as its nothen in the world but my braggadocia."

Rosa's dreams were as pleasant as her rest was undisturbed: she had been with Montreville, the Montreville she knew at Pontefract, and no Mrs. Woudbe was so much as thought on: his image, once so dear, was so strongly impressed on her mind when she awoke, that it required recollections deep and dire to chase him thence; so that Betty had got to "an ouse of her own" before she distinctly knew where she was.

"But when we are alone, may I not call you Betty?" she replied;—"you know I used to do so when you *had* a house of your own."

"Why, Miss, use is second nature, and so you had better not run no risk; for, as John Brown used to say——"

"Ah, Betty! I am glad to hear you speak of good John Brown."

"Lord, Miss Rosy, I promise you I never wish to do no such thing;—but you know what a passel of nonsense he used to stuff his poor head with out of old books;—but I bag, Miss, if our stuart, a fine portly man, and as big as three of John Brown, asks you any thing

thing about my husband, you'll never own to he being a fowger ;—and there's Mr. M'Lane—you know Mr. M'Lane, Miss ?”

“ How should I know him, Betty ?”

“ No matter who knows him, Miss, for the matter of that—a poor, proud prodigality parson—as our stuart ses, all the Scotch is no better nor a passel of nothenites. His Grace, to be sure, has got a grand castle, and a heap of estates ; but, then, there 'tis all over-run with poor relations, and that's what I hates ; he never got no good from sitch cattle nor I, sept runin up a score ;—I am sure I have had my share of sufferens.”

“ But good John Brown, Betty, he made up for all.”

“ Not he, indeed, Miss, he never made up nothen to me ; howsever, Mr. M'Lane sent for me to his room ;—to be sure, as our stuart ses, 'twould have been better manners for he to come to mine ;—for if John Brown was a fowger, that was more nor he knowed ; and what the eye don't see the heart don't grieve ;—howsever, he said his Grace ordered me, upon my pericle, not to drop a syllabub about the blackamore Kurnel's taking you out of charity ; now, as to the blackamore Kurnel, Miss Elinor, poor sole, bid me never not to mention his name ; no more I ever did, only to our stuart.”

“ And why to him, Betty, if you were commanded not ?”

“ Why, Miss, because, to tell you the truth, Mr. M'Lane wanted to lock the stable when the steed was stolen ; for after you was turned out, I told our stuart the whole story, sept about John Brown being a fowger ; and oh dear, ah dear, Miss, what a story he told me about that blackamore Kurnel !—gracious heart ! if my hair did not stand an ind !—but I must not tell no man, woman, nor child—not that it infected me so much, because I had an inkling of it once at Penry ; but least said is soonest mended, and a close tongue makes a wise head ;—so you see, Miss, one good turn deserves another : You say, as my husband was a credibility parson,—suppose a size man, or some other great officer, and I'll say as I knowed you at boarding-

school, and your parents was topping tradesmen, and well to do."

Rosa was not surprised to find the Duke's caution extend to his servants; and had not Betty, with her vanity, betrayed such entire indifference towards her husband, she could have been amused by it.

"Really, Mrs. Brown," said she, coldly, "I know of no better praise to give your husband than what he justly merited, that of unimpeached integrity."

"Well, well, Miss, I don't want to disparage John Brown no more nor you; but if Miss Elinor gets her senses again, she'll be a Duchess, that's a sure mark; and so, as our Stuart ses, he'll wait till my seven years is up; for you see, Miss, I can't marry before; why I shall be a Duchess's woman, and that will be as misbecoming for a fowger's wife as for you to be perked up among quality, when every body knowed as you was nothen but a poor Beggar Girl; but Lord, Miss, here are you keepen me, when his Grace and my Lady are waiting for nothen in the world but to go with you, to Miss Elinor."

"Me keeping you, Betty! why did you not tell me this before?"

"Well, Miss, and so I should, only you would keep talking about John Brown, and such nonsense."

Rosa made all possible haste. "But how is Elinor to-day?"

"She was very rumbustious once this morning; but she is in her sulks now. I am sure my sufferens with her is great; sometimes she wont close her poor eyes all night; howsever, my Lady been in her room, and kissed her, and cried, and said, I dare say, twenty kind things; and so, as she never hardly speaks, we did not inspect it;—but, on a sudden,—Lord, I was fit to drop—she spoke as quiet as I do now. 'Where is my Rosa? you promised I should see her.' My Lady was ready to run wild with joy. 'You shall see her,' ses she; 'did I ever deceive you, Elinor?' I am sure the wisdom of King Solomon, no, nor that comical Joe Miller, as our Stuart is always reading, could not have made a no better answer. 'No,' ses she, 'it is I who deceived you; but Rosa would have adviced me better.'

Well,

Well, my Lady was fit to break her heart, she was so glad; and she ran to the library to his Grace."

"I am ready," cried Rosa, eagerly.

"Well, Miss, I must say that for your face, I said before, when you was quite a little dwarf, shivering in the wash-tub, it is worth washing, my gracious, if you don't use nothen but water; for my part, I always use nothen but milk of roses; and, upon my word a very nice muslin dress too!"

Rosa had no longer patience; but passing Betty while she was examining her dress, found the way to the library.

Lady Denningcourt and the Duke had been congratulating each other on the sense and recollection of Elinor, and now waited to witness an interview, which they expected would be very affecting; but neither the interest nor importance of the event retained a place in Lady Denningcourt's ideas, from the moment of Rosa's entrance, her complexion and features underwent the same change as on the preceding evening, and she recoiled several paces back.

Rosa was no less grieved than mortified.

After a long pause, she again advanced; and taking Rosa's hand, led her nearer the light, when an anxious and solemn scrutiny of her features was followed by a particular survey of her person; the fine ringlets, which shaded her elegant-formed shoulder, were put back. Tears flowed from Lady Denningcourt's eyes; she relinquished the hand she held; her own dropped, lifeless, as she turned to the Duke, and, deeply sighing, exclaimed, "Like me!"

The Duke, concerned and affected, told her she forgot Miss Athelane; then addressing Rosa with the morning salutations, asked why a gloom overspread her fair face? "You looked," he added, "at your entrance, as if conscious of the power to dispense the happiness you felt yourself."

"Oh, my Lord!" she replied, "how flattering to my heart would that consciousness be! but I sink under a contrary feeling; misfortune pursues me even here: if my unhappy resemblance must always so affect Lady

Denningcourt, let me be rather banished her presence for ever than give her pain."

"Fear it not," replied the Duke, "when it ceases to surprise, it will please; she will behold you with more delight than pain."

"That time," joined Lady Denningcourt, with compassion, "is already come, Miss Walsingham; and if you were not endeared to me by the soothing hope of contributing to the restoration of my Elinor, your face is such a passport to my affection, that I could have selected you from a multitude, as an object of regard; and when I tell you it is the fond choice of my virgin love, the husband of my heart, the—yes, I owe you my confidence, for the pain I have given you—the father of my Elinor, you resemble—"

"Heavenly God!" cried Rosa, starting back, "was Colonel Buhanun the father of Elinor?"

Lady Denningcourt sunk on a sofa.—"What!" cried she, shaking from head to foot, "did you know Colonel Buhanun?"

Rosa wept.

"What idea burns on my brain," continued the Countess. "How old are you?"

"About the age of Miss Athelane."

"Then," replied the Countess, as if relieved from a painful surmise, "it cannot be."

"Still you forget Miss Athelane, madam," said the Duke.

"No, ah, no! but I remember her father! You, Miss Walsingham, could not know Colonel Buhanun? you have not been in India?"

"Forgive me, Sir," cried Rosa, folding her hands in a supplicating attitude.

"Forgive you! what have you done?" asked Lady Denningcourt—"why won't you answer me? did you, could you know Colonel Buhanun?"

The Duke again reminded her of Miss Athelane. "You will," he added, "be unfit for the interview you were so anxious to witness."

"I am unfit already, Sir;—why are you a party in so ill-timed a reserve? Tell me, Miss Walsingham, I
conjure

conjure you, if you regard my peace, were you related to Colonel Buhanun?"

Rosa answered, without hesitation, in the negative.

"What, then, means this apparent mystery? did you know him?"

Rosa threw herself on her knees: she no longer took a cautionary lesson from the Duke's looks; she implored Lady Denningcourt's pardon for being surprised into a mistake, against which she had been warned; but whatever might be the consequence to herself, she could not bear to see her ladyship pained by a suspense it was in her power to relieve. "You know, madam," she continued, "that I am wretched and friendless, but not *how* wretched, and *how* friendless:—that my mother, a common mendicant, abandoned me in my infancy, left me a houseless, starving Little Beggar;—that I was taken, relieved, beloved, and educated, by the best and most charitable of men—by the ever-lamented Colonel Buhanun;—and Oh!" she cried, with folded hands, and streaming eyes, while Lady Denningcourt sat fixed and pale as marble, "let not that which was the first blessing and advantage of my humble existence now be turned to my misfortune; let not the poor deserted child, whose miseries found an easy access to the heart of benevolence, become on that account the unhappy object of your aversion. Alas! madam, however he may have offended *you*, I can never cease to remember the emanations of his generous soul; I owe to him that I am not a companion of vice, as well as poverty; and my tears must flow for him as long as I have memory."

"How long," asked Lady Denningcourt, in a voice scarce articulate, "have you left India?"

India! Rosa never was out of Britain.

Where then did she see Colonel Buhanun?

At Penry.

"God of heaven!"

Yes, it was there, when abandoned by her mother, Rosa was relieved by Colonel Buhanun.

Lady Denningcourt fell back, and was carried senseless to her chamber.

Lady

Lady Hopely, who was not an early riser, being alarmed, and informed by the Duke of what had passed, judged, that as the part of Rosa's history which would most afflict the Countess, was the residence of the Colonel in England, it would most properly come from themselves when she was perfectly recovered; accordingly she hastened to her chamber, while the Duke, anxious to relieve Rosa from the grief and regret she felt at having caused Lady Denningcourt's indisposition, as well as to try the effect of her presence on Elinor, proposed to accompany her to her friend.

Never had Rosa stood more in need of a moment to collect her thoughts; but not daring to ask for indulgence at so interesting a period, she followed the Duke's lead to the boudoir, where she had first seen Elinor, which was the only place where she would take nourishment; and indeed was so fond of it, that it was often with difficulty she could be prevailed on to sleep out of it.

She had waited a few minutes after the Countess left her in all the flutters of impatient expectation, but had now sunk into a sullen gloom, from which no effort could rouse her.

"I have brought your Rosa, my dear Miss Athelane; won't you welcome her?" said the Duke.

"Elinor! my dear Elinor! won't you speak to your Rosa? nor so much as look at her?"

"She is in her sulks," whispered Betty, "and perhaps won't speak this week."

"Elinor! dear Elinor!" repeated Rosa.

The fair statue was immovable, and gave no sign of intellect.

Perhaps this was the most trying affliction Rosa ever felt: she wept, embraced, and still called on her dear Elinor without the least effect.

The disappointment of the Duke was visible.

The doctor, however, was not discouraged: he advised her being left to her attendants; and the Duke inquired, in a voice of dejection, if the ladies were in the breakfast room? finding they were not, he told Rosa he should meet her there when the bell rung; and she was going to her chamber, when a footman informed her a person wanted to speak to her.

"To

"To me!" cried Rosa.

"Yes; and as he was a poor cripple, and seemed to want charity, the man said he had left him in the little hall."

Rosa had hoped John Brown was on his way to Edinburgh; but as this was unquestionably him, she hastened to the little hall.

The gardener, who carried her packet to the castle, had found it "mortal hot walking;" and meeting at the door of an hedge ale-house, other as hot souls as his own, talked so oddly when he staggered across the park and delivered the packet, that John lamented he had

"Taken an enemy into his mouth, to steal away his brains."

The man was conscious of no such theft; on the contrary, as he flattered himself nobody could talk better, he entered into such an account of affairs at Delworth, as convinced honest John, that, as he said, the

"Jewel of a maid is her good name;

"And no legacy so rich as honesty."

his favourite maid Rosa had lost the one, and was suspected by the inmates of Delworth, to have parted with the other. John thought, if there were a maid in the world, who was worthy to retain this jewel, it was Rosa; and therefore, after consulting his pillow on the business, he resolved to go to Delworth, and endeavour to learn the state of affairs from herself.

"Why," said he, on approaching Delworth House, "Why should I be more afraid to enter this gate, than I have been at storming a citadel?"

"——— Our doubts are traitors,

"And make us lose the good we oft might win,

"By fearing to attempt."———

So on stumped John,

———"Fearful commentings,"

said he, as he opened the gate of the court-yard,

"Are leaden servitors to dull delay."

In that moment he was struck dumb with astonishment, at seeing the rosy gills, the white hat, the morocco slippers, the chintz morning frock; in short, at seeing Sir Solomon Mushroom altogether, stalking from the stables, where his fine horses stood, to the back entrance of the house.

“ The image of a wicked, heinous fault
“ Is in his eye,”

quoth John; “ and God forgive me if I don’t preface some mischief to poor Miss Rosy; but though he does

“ Bestride the world like a Colossus,”

yet it is, as my poor Colonel said, as well to know an evil, as to fear it; and,

“ Great men have reaching hands;”

so I will take off my hat, which is what I never did when I was a gentleman soldier, to any body but my Colonel, and my wife, and ask his honour—honour signifies nothing when addressed to such men as Sir Solomon Mushroom—if he can help me to the sight of Miss Rosy.”

“ No—she is not here, she is gone,” in a loud rough voice, as Sir Solomon entered the house, had like to have annihilated poor John.

“ Ah master timber-toe,” cried one of the grooms, who remembered him passing on the outside of the stage, “ what you are new rigged? you are got into good plight.”

This bit of wit, which was accompanied with a roll of the tongue and a leer of the eye at another groom, went to John’s heart.

“ What,” said he, “ shall it be ever said, that John Brown

“ Cram’d his maw, or cloth’d his back
“ From filthy vice?”

and so, without saying another word, John returned to the castle; and while putting on his own old clothes,

“ ’Tis the mind,”

said he,

“ makes

“ makes the body rich ;
 “ And as the sun breaks through the darkest cloud,
 “ So honour shineth in the meanest habit.”

And now I think I can have heart to speak to the great lady herself, who was so honourable to Miss Rosa ; for certainly talking loud with another's man's coat on one's back, except indeed the King's coat, is like fighting under a false banner.”

Before he got out of the park, he met the same gardener's labourer who brought him the packet, and from him learned where Rosa was.—“ So here,” said he, having given an account of the morning's employment, “ here I am with a

“ Thousand hearts within my bosom.”

Women—Miss Rosy—

“ Women are not in their best fortunes strong,”

much less when every fool is ready to put upon them, and

“ Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
 “ Thou shalt not escape calumny,”

and that it is, Miss, that makes me think so much of my poor Betty ;” and John wiped his eye with a piece of an old silk handkerchief.

Rosa, impatient to give ease to his honest heart, could not find words or breath to tell him half fast enough, how happily every thing had turned out. She wished also to tell him of his “ poor Betty ;” but certain that poverty would damp his welcome, was begging him to return to Denningcourt Castle, and change his old clothes for those better ones, which he knew were not the price of dishonesty, when Mrs. Betty put first her head, and then her whole well dressed figure, in at the door, with “ Lord Miss, who could think you would stand here, shilly shally, with that poor object, while the Duke and the two young ladies, are waiting for you to breakfast.—You may go to the servants' hall, friend ; all the poor folk that come here, eat and drink as much as they like.—Oh Miss Rosy, here's our Stuart coming ; and now for all he is such a portly

portly man, and worth a power of money, you'll see how perspective he behaves to me, and to you too, for all I told him about the blackamoor kurnel."

The steward, a man, as Betty said, as big as three of John, entered from one door of the little hall, in his way to the other; he bowed to Rosa, smiled at Betty, and having great weight to carry, went on in a cautious, consequential pace.

John staggered back; Rosa advanced towards him, and Betty turned her front to the smiling steward. John, at length, unable to contain the overflow of his feeling, stumped up to his wife, caught her in his arms, and sobbed "Betty—my dear Betty."

Betty sent forth a succession of long screams, and John expected a fit, but they were a sort of ungenteel infirmity Betty had left off; she struggled with more than female strength, till she had not only emancipated herself, but thrown John down; then running towards the steward, cried, "Oh goodness! oh gracious! a ghost! a ghost! save me from the ghost!"

The steward stopped with a ready "What's the matter?—who are you?"

"My dear Betty," cried John, having gained his foot, and wiping his eyes with the bit of silk handkerchief, "have you quite forgot me? or has joy bewildered your senses? ah my poor girl, alack, alack,

"Grief hath changed me since you saw me last;

"And careful hours, with time's deformed hand,

"Have written strange defeatures in my face."

"As to writing," replied Betty, turning her eyes away with disgust, "nobody never wrote no letter to me; and I don't believe I never seed your yellor face in my life."

"Betty!" and John's yellow face expressed an equal portion of anger and surprise,

"Disgrace have of late knock'd too often at my door."

"There let it knock,—it shan't come to mine."

"Betty, you cannot have forgot your husband? for though

"Prosperity is the very bond of love,

"Whose fresh complexion, and whose heart together,

"Affliction alters."

"Fresh

"Fresh complexion! why sure you don't go to pretend to fresh complexion?—I am sure it makes me sick to look at you."

John's colour rose; I am sorry you are grown so nice, Mrs. Brown; but if you are altered, I am not."

"Why then I advise you to alter, for you cant never change for the worst."

"Woman! woman!

"Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;

"Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;

"Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;

"Bear a fair presence, though your heart *be* tainted."

Poor Betty's misfortune had come upon her in the moment least expected, and she was in a most perplexing dilemma; Mr. Steward's habitual smile was changed to earnest attention; and while Rosa walked to a window to avoid appeals from either of the contending parties, he stood firmly noting all that passed.

"Why dost look so strangely, wife? I left thee to perform a dear duty; but in all my sufferings, I have been faithful, Ah Betty!

"'Tis one thing to be tempted, another to fall."

"As to tempting, I defy Satan and all his imps; and may be you are one of them, in the likeness of John Brown, my husband, who went away and left me to be put upon by every body; I don't believe you are he no more nor nothing."

"You don't wish to believe it, Betty, but

"There are no tricks in plain and simple faith."

"Tricks! I believe you know more about tricks nor me; but don't think to trick me; I married you, if it be you, when you was a tight able man, and I shan't never go to take up with a cripple, as got hardly no coat to his back."

John put his piece of handkerchief in his pocket.

"You are not asked, Betty, to take up with the cripple; but

—————"Do not tempt my misery

"Left that it make me so unsound a man

"As to upbraid you with those kindneses

"That I have done for you."

"Me

“ Me make you unsound ! is that all you learn in your books ? I am sure nobody can’t call a man with but one leg a sound man. I don’t care that for your speeches out of old tatter’d books ;” and Betty very ungraciously threw a piece of paper, which she had been twisting into all sorts of forms, at her liege lord.

“ Keep thy temper, however, Betty ; see that you do nothing to repent of, for

“ The wounds heal ill that men do give themselves.”

“ Fiddle faddle about wounds and man ; I don’t know that I am going to give myself any thing like it ; and as to repenting, I am not afraid of no such thing ; you left me—”

“ On a dear duty, Betty.”

“ Duty ! what duty can a man have to leave his wife.”

As this smart repartee of Betty, was accompanied with a fly leer at Master Steward, as Master Steward answered with a half smile, and as neither the one nor the other escaped the observation of honest John,

“ Poor woman !” quoth he, in an accent of mingled pity and indignation,

“ Head strong liberty is lash’d with woe.”

And though a man is degraded by contention with a woman ; though to punish them

—————“ ’Tis greater skill,

“ In true hate, to let them have their will ;

“ The very devils cannot please them better.”

“ Yet, as I do not hate thee, I will tell thee !”—

As John’s voice was raised, Mr. Steward advised him to speak lower ; adding, “ really friend, when you answer ladies, it should be in civiler terms.”

“ I am not bound to please thee with my answers.”

“ Or, if I were,

“ An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.”

John’s arm and stump began to work alternately.

Betty’s head was toss’d, and her brow knit in a very pretty scornful manner ; but it was no longer safe to
trifle

trifle with John ; he stepped up close to her, flourishing not one arm but both ;—" If that great man is of consequence to you, Mrs. Brown, bid him not meddle—and

" Fye, fye, unknit that threatening unkind brow,
 " And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,
 " To wound thy lord, thy king, thy master."

Betty, though frightened, answered, having first got round the other side of the Steward,—that she cared for no Lord but my Lord Duke, nor no King but King George, and she was old enough and wise enough to govern herself.

" Woman, woman !" quoth John, encreasing in warmth,

" Such duty as the subject owes his prince,
 " Even such a woman oweth her true Lord."

" Lord help your crazy head," cried Betty, in an humbler tone of voice, and drawing still near the Steward.

" Keep off friend," quoth Master Steward.

" And why so ?

———" Thou *friend* of an ill fashion——"

say,

" Look not big, nor storm, nor stare, nor fret ;
 " I stay here on my bond."

My wife

" Is my goods, my chattels, she is my house, my household stuff, my field, my barn, my horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing, and here she stands, touch her who dare."

Mr. Steward could not have been Mr. Steward, in the Denningcourt family, had he not been a man of moral conduct ; and though he had conducted himself with a spice of gallantry, which convinced Betty she might be Mr. Steward's lady, it was as far from his intention as interest, to separate man and wife, he therefore bid John Brown speak in a lower key, and added, as he moved his unwieldy person out of the hall, nobody wished to deprive him of his right.

Poor

Poor Betty, whose courage subsided the instant her great support left her, now began to whine;—"Lord, John Brown," she cried, "how can you talk so about goods and chattels, and I don't know what; I don't know what goods and chattels you may have, but I have not got nothing but my cloaths, and I shall never part with none of them; and as to house and household stuff, why Lord, they are all sold for almost nothen, and enough too,—the horse was spavined, and the household stuff worm-eaten; but then as to oxesses and asses, why you know we never had no such thing belonging to us."

John could not see Betty's tears unmoved; he took out his piece of handkerchief, "Oh Betty, he cried,

"My better parts are all thrown down."

"To be sure they are, John Brown, every body knows ones legs is every body's better part."

"Hard hearted woman! thou dost not feel that

———"Praising what is lost

"Makes the remembrance more dear."

But I will not trouble thee, I know I left thee to sorrow;

"And he that stands on a slippery place

"Makes nice of no vile hold to stay himself up."

"Sorrow indeed! yes and slippery enough I should have found it, for there I was like to lose the use of *both my legs*; nobody knows what has been my sufferens,—and after all, when I am picking up a little, to have a husband as I thought dead and buried, come out of his peaceful grave, when nobody never thought of no such thing.—Oh dear, dear, it is too bad."

"Tis a sore affliction, indeed Betty," replied John, with a melancholy smile, but

———"Weariness can snore on the flint,

"While resty sloth pines on the down pillow."

"Ay John, I always told you, that you was good at snoring."

Well

“ Well Betty, I forgive thy “ biting words,” I know

“ How quickly nature falls to revolt.
“ When gold becomes her object.”

“ But farewell wife,

“ We’ll no more meet, no more see one another ;
“ But yet thou art my flesh and blood.”

—Well no matter.—if ever John Brown should again have money or friends, thou shalt want neither ; if not

“ ——— Life being weary of worldly bars
“ Never lacks power to dismiss itself ;”

and this cripple and yellow face shall make thee sick no more.”

Rosa had continued an ear-witness of the matrimonial discord, sympathising with the feelings of honest John, but not chusing to seem to observe them, and hoping the silence that followed his last speech, preceded a reconciliation, till, after two minutes dead silence, Betty burst out, crying and lamenting.

Never, there never was so misfortunate a woman : she supposed, now, the poor simple man was off again ; and what good was a husband to a poor woman, when he was always taking such freaks, and come back when nobody wanted him without all his limbs ;—and now, God knew, whether he would ever come back ; or if he did, whether he might not leave all his limbs behind, and so come home blind as well as lame. Oh ! nobody who once kept a house of their own, was never so misfortunate.

“ Where is he gone ?” said Rosa, vexed and surprised, on turning round, to see only Betty

“ Gone, Miss ! who can tell ? ’tis a long lane that has no turning ; but you see, Miss, there is no end to my sufferens ; bnt, howsever, I shan’t vex myself no more about him ; enough is never enough with him. How he runs on with rig my roll stuff out of silly books, and no sooner come back than off he is again ; —oh, dear, dear ! what a misfortunate person I am : I never can shew my nose in the Stuart’s room no more.”

“ I must

"I must tell you, Mrs. Brown, (and Rosa's voice, as well as colour rose) it would be more to your credit to think less of any other man, and more of the good creature you sent away so unfeelingly."

"Who me, Miss! me sent him away! geminigig! as our stuart ses, did he not pop off as fast as if he had twenty legs, making foolish speeches all the while, and banging his arms, as if the weather had been frosty; and was not my heart in my mouth to call him back? and didn't I fall a crying fit to break—but, Lord, if there is not my bell! Miss, you must go to breakfast. Again! what's the matter now?"

"Stop, Betty,—it is Elinor's bell?"

Betty did not stop, and Rosa, after hesitating a short time whether she should go to the breakfast-room or follow her, deciding on the latter, she was met near Elinor's door by Betty, running and crying, "Oh, dear! Miss Elinor is in one of her rumbustious fits—I must fetch the doctor."

Scarce had she spoke, before first Dido, and then Elinor rushed after her.

"My dear, dear Elinor!" cried Rosa.

"Ah, Rosa! my own dear Rosa! are you indeed come back?"

The violence at once subsided; and when the doctor followed Betty, he found his patient weeping in the arms of her friend.

As he considered this a certain sign of convalescence, he imparted the grateful tidings immediately to the Duke, who gladly carried it to Lady Denningcourt; and never, indeed, was she in greater need of consolation.

When the Countess heard from her Lord the strange and, to her, incredible account of the recent death, as he heard it from Major Buhanun, of a man whom she had long considered as no more, she was at court; and the Duke of Athelane happening to be in the circle, she mentioned it to him as an odd and groundless report. The manner in which he received it, however, alarmed her; and when on further investigation, she found he actually had survived his intended suicide, the regret she felt was as poignant and perhaps as lasting

as when the news of his death was received first at Athelane.

But it is impossible to paint the distracting agony of her soul, when she understood he had been in England, and must have heard, have known, nay, perhaps seen her the contented and apparently happy wife of another; while he, in ill health, deprived of all comfort, self estranged from a family to whom he was dear, from a paternal home, and from a country he loved, had pined among strangers, in an obscure village, abhorring his own existence, and, no doubt, cursing hers.

The consolations of friendship were at this moment vain: in vain was she reminded of her ignorance of his fate and the innocence of her intentions, his honour, his love, and his injuries, were before her; her own heart arraigned her, and she declared her prospects were shut in for ever.

Although the Duke was extremely afflicted, and indeed blamed himself for what had happened, he knew the dignified simplicity of Lady Denningcourt's soul; no injury, injustice or calamity, by which she could herself be the immediate sufferer, would have so overwhelmed her with sorrow, or so entirely deprived her of fortitude; but it was a sense of wrong, of affliction, of agony, inflicted on another by her means that only could reduce her to despair. She had in this instance been the source of misery to one who was past reparation; she had injured, where no atonement could be offered; she had offended where no pardon could be dispensed; she had defaced her own image, in the heart where it was worshipped; and it was by her means the man of woes had died the man of wrongs.

To renovate her fortitude, and render her accessible to comfort, it was first necessary to reconcile her in some degree to herself. The Duke did not attempt to reason on what he knew she considered as established facts: he allowed Wallace Buhanun all the charms of person and mind she insisted he possessed; but whatever were his virtues, he wanted the energy which can only do honour to the Creator: he knew, no doubt, what was right, but wanted resolution to reduce knowledge to practice;

practice; and it was from his own weakness, not hers, all his misfortunes proceeded. No logic can excuse the deviation from moral rectitude, which could tempt a man to violate the law of hospitality by encouraging in himself, or seeking to inspire another, with a passion destructive of the happiness of his entertainer and benefactor. Love, he insisted, like vice, if opposed, would be conquered; and the first struggle insured victory; but, like vice also, the first lapse was seldom—very seldom recoverable. When therefore, Wallace Buhanun, instead of resisting a fascination no doubt powerful, and receding from the tempting ruin, indulged his presumptuous wishes, at the expence of the peace of his patron's family, he laid himself the foundation of that ruin which eventually overwhelmed him: he has suffered, but have not we also suffered? What a brother was mine! cut off by sorrow in the meridian of his days; what a mother, what a son was lost to the House of Athelane! “If you had *not* been the wife of Earl Denningcourt could you have bound your soul to the man from whom the glory of our race, the young Dungaron, received his death-blow?”

“Do you call this consolation, Duke?” said Lady Hopely.

“I call it justice,” he replied; “and Lady Denningcourt feels it.”

“If it be justice, it is justice unblended with mercy, to charge on one so young and amiable, a crime forced on him by the violence of others.”

“Have I done this, niece? no, I trace the evil to its source, but I pity the victim—I am even ready to admit the punishment severe.”

“Severe! ah, uncle! what must have been his feelings, his resentment, his hatred of the cause! have you considered this?”

“I have considered there is in existence a part of this unhappy man, which heaven in its mercy spares, to give you the power of appeasing your own self upbraidings;—if you feel you have not requited the tenderness of the father, transfer it to his child; if you are conscious of injuring him, though innocently, make the reparation to her: if your heart is unchangeable,

able, love him in his offspring, acknowledge her openly in the face of the world. You cannot, perhaps, in law legitimate her ; but what being of honour or humanity will respect her or you the less on that account ? she has been long without a mother."

" Alas ! my dear uncle, what a dreadful thought is that ! does not the angry spirit of the father this moment charge me with that neglect of his child, which is the latent cause of her misfortune ? "

" Appease that angry spirit, then, by marking the wisdom, the justice, the mercy of an over-ruling Providence : The father rescues an infant Beggar from all the horrors of wretchedness at the very place where, unknown to him, his own child resides ; that Beggar lives to restore the daughter of her benefactor to a blessing more dear than life. Hah ! see, Lady Denningcourt, (leading her to the window) there is your child, the child of him for whom you mourn ; she has been worse than dead—a miracle is wrought in her favour ; her reason, dreadful to thought, has been taken from her—it is returning, but her mother is insensible to the blessing—" *her prospects are shut in for ever.* "

" It is indeed my child ! she hangs on the arm of her friend ; she looks composed. God be praised ! But ah, uncle ! how is it that this happy Beggar—happy, since beloved by Wallace Buhanun—how is it that she bears his image so exact ? I once thought, but I hated myself—"

The Duke understood the hint—it had occurred to himself ; but her age was the proof of the Colonel's faith to his then loved Elinor.

" Look," cried Lady Hopely, " Elinor stops ; she looks up—dear creature, she courtesies. Won't you go down ? I protest I must. "

The Duke thought they had better leave her to her friend. Lady Denningcourt kissed her hand, and retired from the window, if not consoled by the Duke's arguments, at least convinced they were just.

Rosa had the comfort now to be fully recognized : they walked in the park full two hours, and then Elinor wished to return to the boudoir.

" You will hate me, Rosa," said she, as she entered.

“Hate you! hate my Elinor! impossible!”

“I fear you will, when you know all, because I hated myself, and had no friend near me; but you are come at last;—if you had been here—but now you are here, will you make my poor aching heart easy? I have been very ill; sorrow was like a great sea before me, and I saw no way to escape drowning: but if you would tell me one thing, it would do me almost as much good as seeing you.”

“Need I say, my Elinor?”

“Oh, no! you need only tell me, and don’t deceive your poor Elinor, what have they done with the poor boy?”

Betty, who chose to know every thing, was ignorant in this point; and Rosa answered, with hesitation, “I will not deceive you, but I really do not know.”

Elinor shrieked—“Then he is dead—they tied him to the chariot wheels—he is killed.” Her hands relaxed, her eyes fixed on the ground, and she relapsed into gloom and silence.

“There now,” cried Betty—“did ever mortal see the like! she is in her fulks again.”

The doctor, more sure of her perfect recovery from short relapses, again advising Rosa to leave her, she retired to her chamber, with no time as Betty gravely assured her, to make her toilet before dinner, for that the warning bell would ring in half an hour, when the ladies always assembled in the drawing room; for her part, it took her near double the time to do her hair only, and therefore she knewed it was impossible for any body to make themselves decent in half an hour.

C, H A P. IX.

Shewing, among other marvellous and incredible things, that some of the exiles from Scotland are pleased to return thither.

FEW ladies dispatched the orgies of the toilet with more skill, or in less time than Rosa;—she was not only dressed with her usual elegant neatness before the warning bell rung, but had a few minutes left for wonder and reflection.

John would now she certainly thought be on his journey to Edinburgh: She had not the least idea of any law, but that law of right and wrong God has implanted in the nature of the most ignorant of mankind; yet she doubted whether an acknowledged daughter of Colonel Buhanun's, of whose existence he was evidently ignorant, would not supercede any other claim, even if the will, so firmly insisted on by John, and denied by Sir Solomon Mushroom, existed. Had the property considerable as it was, been vested in her, it would have been no question; but, however the guardians of the heirs and the protector of Elinor might agree, the reward of John's faithful attachment to his master was certain; and as Betty did not just now deserve to be a sharer in the satisfaction she felt on that account, that poor unfortunate woman was suffered to bewail poor John Brown's lost leg, his poverty and silly stuff out of old books, while she officiously assisted Rosa to dress without one word of comfort.

At length the signal being given, Rosa hastened down, and after passing the boudoir, where Elinor remained in the same humour and position, entered the drawing room.—The Duke, the two Countesses, and the young ladies were already assembled.

Lady Denningcourt sat near a window, her woman standing behind her with her fan and salts.—Rosa wished to speak—but had not power.

The Countess viewed her attentively, and while a tear strayed down her pale cheek, motioned her woman

to reach a chair, and beckoning to Rosa, drew it near her own.

“Do not apprehend, Miss Walsingham,” said she, “that the obligation I owe you on my Elinor’s account, can be less binding because God has stamped his most perfect image on your countenance ; or that I shall regard you less because you were distinguished by the husband of my unalterable affection ;—ah no, amiable, lovely girl, beware how you make any request to me which I ought not to grant, since I know I feel I cannot resist any thing enforced by the animated expression so dear, so familiar, and so irresistible.”

Rosa was transported ;—she wept,—her sobs were audible, and when the interesting Countess again embraced her, she fell at her feet.

From this hour Elinor was the acknowledged daughter of the Countess of Denningcourt, the grand niece of the Duke of Athelane ; and from this hour also our heroine rivalled her in the affections of her mother, and totally eclipsed her in those of the Duke.

The amiable, generous, and disinterested Miss Angus was a true Athelane ; her fortune was large and independent, and had the whole of her future expectations vanished when Elinor was acknowledged, she would have been happy.

Not so Miss Bruce ;—the head of that poor young lady, against every sort of probability, still run on Mr. Angus and a ducal coronet ;—she had but two solid comforts at this moment to support her under a million of mortifications ; first, that Miss Athelane never would be restored to her perfect senses ; second, that Mr. Angus had never seen the enchanting Miss Walsingham ; and these, like many other of the solid comforts which short sighted mortals grapple to their hearts,

“Like snow that falls upon the river,—

“Once white, then melts away for ever.

Of this, however, she had so little apprehension, that while the tear of sympathy filled every other eye, her dull ones were running over the newspapers in search of the scandal of the day.

“Have you any thing new, Margaret?” asked Lady Hopely.

“You

"You shall judge, ma'am."—

"*The Lady who, rather prematurely, calls herself Countess Dowager of Gauntlet, was, we are informed, yesterday at court; the difficulty about her reception was got over on account of her venerable father, whose age and former services commanded respect.*"

"That may be new, Miss Bruce, but it is not truth," said Lady Denningcourt.

"True! No, certainly, ma'am; one never expects truth in the small-talk of a news-paper."

"If I were Lady Chancellor," rejoined Lady Hopely, "I would move to manage that business otherwise."

"You would not restrain the liberty of the press, Countess?"

"No, Duke;—I would only stop the licentiousness of it."

"I don't exactly see how one end, however desirable, is to be attained, without attacking the other more valuable one."

"Nothing more easy:—Truth they say is a libel; now truth should *not* be a libel;—I would tolerate the press in all sorts of truisms—but for those despicable wretches who trade with the feelings of individuals, who eat, drink, and wear the peace of private families, who make anguish their sport, and murder character,—I would invent a torture worse than those they inflict, if that were in nature."

"That would be a little cruel, Lady Hopely, for you would possibly oblige a number of very dashing fellows, who are equally ashamed to 'dig' or 'beg,' to take purses."

"I should then deserve well of my country, by exalting them in the only way they can be exalted for the benefit of the public."

"Here, here," cried Miss Bruce, "the paragraph is contradicted in both the evening papers."

"Read, Margaret, before the contradiction is contradicted."

Miss Bruce read: "*We are authorised to contradict the paragraph in a morning paper, relative to the appearance at court of the lady, whom it is scarcely pre-*"

“ mature to style Countess Dowager of Gaunilet.—The gallant veteran, her father, Admiral Herbert, presented his grandson, and was honoured with a long audience in the closet; but his daughter was not present.”

Lady Denningcourt would have been surprised if she had; “if the son,” she continued, “has not better proof of his claims, than the existence of his mother, our neighbour will not be uncountessed.”

Miss Angus thought him very handsome; and Lady Hopely, who had often met him, very clever.

The Duke, who had not been in London, the last winter, knew little of the story.

There were somewhere among her father's papers, Lady Denningcourt thought a very interesting account of his poor mother the late Countess.

“Late Countess!” Lady Hopely was sure she was living.

Lady Denningcourt was certain she was drowned when the Vallerton yacht was lost.

“Then, depend upon it, that horrid Earl was married to two wives,” said Lady Hopely; “for I am certain that this young man's mother is forth coming.”

“We shall see,” replied Lady Denningcourt, with an incredulous look.

Every syllable of this conversation made its way to Rosa's heart; her seat grew uneasy; the newspapers were read out, but she heard nothing more, till roused from a deep reverie by the movement of the company to the eating saloon.

Elinor's gloomy fit still continuing, the ladies left the Duke, Chaplain and Doctor, over their bottle, and withdrew into the music-room. Miss Bruce run her thick ended fingers over Miss Angus's harp, and snapp'd a string in a moment.

Margaret Bruce, Lady Hopely said, was always talking nonsense, or doing mischief except when she was making caricatures, or bad verses.

Miss Bruce was awkwardly trying to repair the accident.

“Shall I assist you?” asked Rosa.

“Do you know how?”

“I will try.”

There's

"There's a good soul;—Lady Hopely, she whispered, is always making bad worse, and Angus will be so angry!—Why you have done it already."

Rosa run her taper fingers over the strings just as Miss Angus entered.

"You are obliged to Margaret, I assure you, Angus," cried Lady Hopely, "she put your harp out of tune on purpose to let you know Miss Walsingham is a scientific performer; but I have heard of her harp and her grand piano forte; they were set to roup and fold."

"Sold!" and Rosa coloured.

"Just so:—Doctor Cameron bought them."

Miss Angus was delighted to hear Rosa could play.—She performed very ill herself, she said, but hoped to improve.

Lady Denningcourt left her seat and asked Rosa to play one lesson. Never was request made with more interest, and complied with with more grace; the attractions of the music was stronger than the bottle,—the gentlemen entered.

"I cannot understand," said Lady Denningcourt, "how you have attained so many accomplishments at a country-boarding school."

"The conductress of that boarding-school," Rosa replied, her cheeks tinged with generous energy, "was herself an adept in every science taught under her roof; my story interested her; I owe more than words can pay to her particular care."

"Vastly well, Miss Walsingham; Mrs. Harley," the Duke said, "could not wish for a more able eulogist."

"Besides this advantage," resumed Rosa, "I awoke from my golden vision in time to make those accomplishments useful which I began for ornament; and the harp being subject to accidents, I learned to tune well from necessity; I found this very useful. Some of the ladies, Miss Athelane in particular, never touched her harp, without—"

"Miss Athelane!" Lady Denningcourt never understood she could touch it at all.

"She may have neglected it,—she was so indulged."

"Indulged! was she so much indulged? and was that Dr. Creak really fond of her?"

"No young lady in the school had so fond a father."

"Indeed! have we not been too hard on this poor man, Duke?"

"What, because while he cheated her of her little fortune, he indulged her improperly? does it not strike you, that if you had not been in a situation to claim her, she must eventually have been reduced to the indigence from which her father rescued this charming girl; had she been properly managed, such as Miss Walsingham is, she would have been."

Rosa, though she knew Elinor's deficiencies were not the consequence of neglect, could say nothing on the subject, and therefore, vexed she had begun it, ran over the strings of the harp to change it.

Miss Walsingham could sing, Miss Angus was sure.

Rosa did not affect to disclaim a talent she was conscious of possessing in a superior degree.

Well, if Miss Bruce wrote a novel, Miss Walsingham should be her heroine; she had all the requisites.

Lady Hopely advised her not to attempt it—she would only spoil a good story.

"Some people might perhaps think," said Miss Bruce, with pique, "I could embellish a bad one."

"Then they would neither know you nor the story," replied Lady Hopely.

"A song, dear Miss Walsingham," cried Miss Angus.

"To end the battle of tongues," said Lady Hopely.

A sudden thought struck Rosa; she removed the harp close to the open window and sung an air from Orpheus, which was so great a favorite with Mrs. Harley, that every child in her school played and sung it; at the second repetition of "Eurydice," Elinor and Dido hastily left the boudoir; the former seated herself by Rosa's side, and the latter lay at her feet.

When the air was ended, Elinor looked round, and meeting the humid eye of Lady Denningcourt, hastily arose, and kneeled before her.

"Heaven bless my dear child," said the Countess, stifling her emotion.

Elinor

Elinor then returned to Rosa.

"How governess Harley loved to hear you sing that song, Rosa."

"And she loved to hear *you* sing it too, Elinor."

"Poor governess Harley! she is dead I think?"

"No, my dear, only a little indisposed."

"Ah that Penry; once I loved Penry; did not you, Rosa?—but every body is either ill or lost there."

"No, my dear Elinor, you wrong poor Penry, all our friends there are well."

"All, Rosa?—not *all*."

"All I recollect;—Sir Solomon Mushroom I saw yesterday; his daughter—"

"Do you call them friends, Rosa?"

"Then Doctor Croak and Mrs. Bawsky—I have seen them too; they are in the house where you left them. And your Rosa, you see, is neither ill nor lost. As to the Doctor's son——"

Elinor trembled.

"He," joined the Duke, "is returned to his father."

"Our father which art in heaven," whispered Elinor, still trembling.

"No, my dearest Elinor, be assured he is not with his heavenly father."

"Upon your honour, Rosa, is he not killed?"

"Oh no, my dear love," said Lady Denningcourt, "take it on *my* honour he is well and happy; you will not doubt *my* word."

"Oh no, madam, I dare not; and if you say he is well, and—but that cannot be; he cannot be happy, not quite happy, that I cannot expect; but if he is not dead, not killed, not tied to the chariot wheels"—and she put her hand to her head.—"Oh how my temples beat—"

"And so does mine, my dear; let us walk into the air."

Elinor looked anxiously at Lady Denningcourt for permission.

"Wherever you please, my love;—this charming young lady is your friend, your guest; you must do the honours of your house."

"As I used to do at—at——"

"At Penry, or Walbrook;—and when you are weary of walking, you know you have a carriage;—be happy my Elinor, and you will make us all so."

Elinor courtesied, and joining Rosa, they strolled round to the other front, and walked under shade of the oaks till the evening bell rung, when the two friends returned arm in arm.

From this day Elinor became every hour more rational; her intellects strengthened as her health improved; and as the power of recollection was sweetened by the most assiduous and tender friendship; as she was countenanced in the splendid style of living, so new and embarrassing, by the presence of that friend with whom she had lived in the truest affection and most unlimited confidence; by whom she was soothed, flattered, and encouraged into a sense of the respect due to her protectress, whether mother or aunt, as well as to the noble family whom she was led to consider as her own; and above all, as Lady Denningcourt assured her that young Croak had returned uninjured to his father, and that she would consider his establishment in life as her own particular concern, the mind of the poor girl became in a very few days so calm that the Duke looked forward with renovated hope to an event, which Miss Bruce still insisted never would, never could take place.

Rosa did not fail to avail herself of the Duke's permission to attend him at six in the library; where she pleased, gratified, and affected him, by a frank detail of all the leading events of her life, excepting only her attachment to Montreville.

The Duke, with that true dignity of soul which influenced all his actions, confessed himself humbled by her story; it proved, he said, that the offspring of a beggar, with a good natural understanding, and proper tuition, might soar as far out of the ken of her equals, as the child of a prince, less happy in either, might sink beneath hers.

He rejoiced that his nephew was neither the husband nor seducer of Katie Buchanan. In the first instance, he could never have pardoned him for uniting himself hereafter to a daughter of Castle Gwrand; in the last,

last, the seduction of innocence was an act he never could have forgiven himself; so much, indeed, was it the wish of the family to see the heir apparent married, that he might have chosen the daughter of the poorest gentleman in Scotland without fear of offending them, provided only that gentleman was not a Buchanan.

He applauded Rosa for the interest she took in the fate of the unfortunate mistress of the castle, but objected to her ostensible interference; he would himself, he had the goodness to say, get every necessary information concerning her; and before Betty came to summon her to Elinor, who was already inquiring for her Rosa, he appointed her to come to him at the same hour any morning she pleased, when he would make her acquainted with the sad events that consigned the grand daughter of a Duke of Athelane to the misfortune of imbruing the manners, sentiment and interest so uncongenial to her rank, as those of Doctor Croak.

Elinor was rational and collected; she wished Rosa to breakfast with her, and afterwards to walk as they had done the day before. They were seen from her window by the delighted mother, and instead of dropping a courtesy, immediately went to her chamber.

That she was received with transport, that every ray of returning reason was a fund of happiness to the family, cannot be doubted; neither, if Rosa's sole merit had been that of restoring the mental faculties of Lady Denningcourt's only child, need it be said her future life, in respect to an ample provision, would have been perfectly easy; but her amiable disposition, pleasing manners and accomplishments endeared her so much, particularly to Lady Denningcourt, and such was the secret pleasure she took in tracing the likeness of her beloved Wallace, that, wishing to conceal an excess she could not repel, she restrained those caresses in company with which she loaded her in private.

The Duke had pressed his niece to visit Athelane, and Lady Hopely was equally urgent to obtain her company to Edinburgh;—the apology for declining
both,

both, Elinor's derangement, was now done away,—she was now convalescent; the objection therefore removed, and the doctor approving of change of scene, Lady Hopely earnestly renewed her invitation, and the Countess cheerfully accepted it.

One grand objection to the hurry Lady Hopely recommended, was the wedding at Delworth, where a perfect carnival was to be held for a week, and where all the genteel people within forty miles round were expected. Miss Angus had, she said, half, and Miss Bruce quite ruined herself in dresses for the ball *al fresco*; and these dresses could be of no sort of use at the races, concerts, balls, or private parties Lady Hopely was anxious to join at Edinburgh.

The Duke had the goodness to arrange the business to the satisfaction of all parties. “You cannot,” said he, “go to these balls *al fresco* without protection; and as I see no young knight ready to fight enchanters for you, suppose you will take up with an old one.”

“You are positively the most beautiful, Duke, in the world,” cried Miss Bruce.

“Not,” joined Miss Angus, “but what a younger beauty might have done as well.”

“Saucy enough;—but as no younger offers, I am inclined to wait for you, and so meet the ladies at Athelane.”

“But a fearful thought strikes me, uncle; though the cards are come, yet this wedding may not take place at the time, nor at all, and then we shall lose both the charming things, the races and the balls.”

“For this I know no remedy but making a wedding and a ball *al fresco* of our own at Athelane, or two balls, and two weddings, if you can so contrive it; though, indeed, few of our own countrymen think better of a fine face for having grown stale in the south.”

“Stale, uncle!”

“Stale, Duke!”

“Oh, barbarous! we, however, accept your knightship.”

This being arranged, the two Countesses, Elinor, and to her infinite joy, Ross, prepared for their speedy journey

journey to Edinburgh, where she anticipated complete gratification.

She would once more embalm the memory of the Major with tears of grateful affection; once more visit the dear Burn side, with the latent, though faint hope that the loved inhabitant of that enchanting retreat might have been heard of by some body there; yes, and spite of her strong aversion to Mr. Simon Frazier, W. S. she would press the sweet Emma and Jessy to her heart;—then what pleasure to meet the good, the friendly Doctor Cameron! and how happy would Mrs. Steward be at the change in her fortune.

Although Lady Denningcourt directed the two friends to have their clothes made exactly alike, Elinor, perfectly indifferent to the profusion of ornaments prepared for herself, took infinite delight in assorting every thing for Rosa, carefully imitating the precision and exactness of Lady Denningcourt's woman in arranging her dresses; and as she was happily busy, she was indulged even in placing them in the imperials.

But while the family at the Jointure-house were engaged—one part of it preparing for a journey, the other for a carnival—what are the beautiful Countess and her guests about at Delworth?

“ Singing and sealing’s no part of our bliss;
“ We rattle our hearts, and seal with a kiss.”

So says the old song, and it says well; but there were no such summary doings at Delworth.

That lawyers who have deeds of importance in their hands to finish, chuse to listen with iron faces, to the anxiety of those who urge them to dispatch, those who have deeds, and employ lawyers, need not be told. Lady Gauntlet and, we must not doubt, Lord Delworth, were almost distracted at the mail’s gallop of Mr. Josiah Turgid, the attorney of Sir Solomon Mushroom, and Mr. Lemuel Supple, the attorney of her ladyship.

No Miss in Great-Britain could be more ripe for a coronet than Miss Mushroom; no gentleman of a few years standing, more willing to pay a good price for the bauble than Sir Solomon her uncle; nor any family
in

in the world more ready and willing to receive the purchase-money than the family of Earl Gauntlet; but still the tardy lawyers were not ready;—Mr. Supple, indeed, assured his noble clients, that he did his possible, but old Turgid was neither to be led nor driven.

Nothing ever was so teasing, cried Miss Mushroom; every thing was in waiting, even to the frames for the descent; every body invited, the day set, and still no absolute certainty, although nothing, it was allowed, but these teasing lawyers, could delay the happiness of Lord Delworth and Miss Mushroom, and consequently that of their respective families.

In this train of fictitious felicity were the family at Delworth, when the carriages of the two Countesses and their suite, passed the porter's lodge, in their way to Scotland.

Rosa, who, with Elinor and Betty, was in Lady Denningcourt's chaise, embraced her friend, and blessed the hour when she had passed those gates, since, through them, she had found her dear Elinor, and the happy asylum at the Jointure-House.

"It was a very round-about way to our ouse, though Miss," cried Betty; "but they say the nearer the church, the furdur from God; and the furdest way about, the nearest way home;—but for my part, I don't like no round-about to such devilditch places as Skntlun, for our Stuart."—

"Pray, Betty, have you ever heard of your husband?"

"To be sure, Miss Elinor; Miss Rosy, I dare say, told you as he was comed home worse nor nothen, and got no more nor one leg, a poor ignoramus of a man—and here now he is off again.—I am sure what my sufferens have been, God he knows; howsever, one swallow don't make a summer, so I shan't fret no more about nothen."

The road for some miles before Carlisle, confirmed Betty in her idea of Skotlun not having a bush or a bramble to dry clothes on; but Rosa felt an indescribable sensation of pleasure, when Lady Hopely's carriage stopped, and she said, "we are in Scotland." Ah, how different were now her feelings, and when

last she passed the boundaries of the two kingdoms. It was just a year since, with a dejected mind, and disordered body, she left Scotland, with a sentiment of native regret; if the prospect before her was dreary; that she had then left was no less so; yet she feared the one, and regretted the other, and her heart sunk as if going from an old home:—now it was lifted up in thankful joy; now it greeted the grand and sublime before her with solemn pleasure, and she inhaled the pure air with ecstacy.

Lady Hopely had a fine house in Queen-Street; what a delightful view of land and sea did it command; even Elinor, though seldom affected by local objects, was struck; and Betty cried out, as she entered the hall, “Well, for my part! if our Stuart has ever been in Skotland, he must be a monstrous tarrydiddle-teller; is this the devilditch country where there is not a bramble nor a bush to dry clothes!” and when civilly accosted by a number of clean healthy servants, each equally anxious to assist and oblige her, “be these the proud upstart nothenites? why sure ’tis the garden of hedon.”

Lady Hopely was every where a gentlewoman; in her own house she was magnificent; there was an air of hospitable grandeur in every thing she said or did; which, though familiar to Lady Denningcourt, charmed both our young friends.

When they took possession of the apartments allotted them, Rosa ran delighted to the window;—there was the Calton on the right, where she had wandered many hours and watered the green sward with her tears;—there were the blue range of distant highlands which over-hung the sweet vale of Castle-Gowrand;—there the wide expanse of waters, with the swelling white sail approaching the gradually narrowing Frith, on whose pellucid bosom the fortunes of many an industrious adventurer were borne: the charming walk to the water of Leith;—the fields, the gardens, the castle—all, the eye took in all that had before charmed it; her heart recognized the very house on Leith walk, where goodness and humanity were enthroned in the heart of Mrs. Steward.

While

While these sensations of voluptuous delight passed in Rosa's mind, Elinor was busy in arranging her clothes, her writing and drawing apparatus, and even placing her dressing-case on the toilet. Betty, Lady Denningcourt's woman, any body, or nobody, might attend on Elinor; the matter was of no concern to her, all she was solicitous about, was herself to wait on Rosa; and her spirits rose or fell as she was suffered to do it, without interruption.

"You know, Rosa," she would say, "when we were at school, you never would play the maid, and I never would be the mistress; they were happy, happy times; suppose us at play now,—I could be content to play to my whole life."

The ladies who were on habits of friendship with Lady Hopely, waited for no cold cards of invitation; it was the friend they loved, not the lady they visited, which brought them in crowds to her house; no affected state, in ceremony's ungracious garb, returned them from the door. Lady Hopely is arrived, circulated through Edinburgh; the knocker was not a moment quiet; every body called, and every body were admitted; even after she sat down to dinner, and the table was crowded to the corners, she could chat, laugh, and welcome her friends.

Lady Denningcourt's spirits were too languid to bear a scene of such agreeable bustle the whole evening; but as Lady Mary, Lady Betty, and Lady Susan Hopely who with their good and amiable father had taken the direct road through Newcastle, when Lady Hopely went with her friend to Denningcourt, and had gone to a seat of the Earl's, twenty miles from Edinburgh, and not expecting her so early, were not yet arrived, the Countess insisted the ladies, as she called Elinor and Rosa, should assist her in entertaining her friends, and receive her daughters who arrived before supper.

The Earl of Hopely was what includes every virtue, and every accomplishment—a perfect *gentleman*; and if a cynic could discover any thing to alter in Lady Hopely, it would be in her husband's presence,
since

since it was Lady, not Lord Hopely, who was every thing to every body

The young ladies were lively, agreeable women, who, without any pretensions to beauty, were more attractive than many first rate toasts.

The two strangers were great objects of curiosity to the company; Lady Denningcourt's story which had been long consigned to oblivion, revived, with the acknowledgment of her daughter; "She was a pretty enough girl;" but Miss Walsingham was an angel.

Rosa's natural turn was a chaste vivacity;—although she had, since the Major's death, contracted a habit of gravity and reflection, the natural consequence of the uncertainty and dependance of her situation:—these were now, however, changed to the most happy confidence. The Duke, who admired the saying of Cæsar, "If I am to die to day, that is what I am to do to day," more than all his conquests, had desired her to meet him in the library the morning they left Denningcourt, when he had shewn her a codicil to his will, executed in proper form, in her favour, though he had not yet made the promised communications of the misfortunes of the Athelane family.

In the possession of such manifold, and unexpected happiness, her friend sitting placidly smiling by her side, could Rosa fail to be in spirits, when a crowded assembly of young people seemed only emulous to add to the pleasure of each other, whose judgment of her was unanimous: Miss Walsingham was the most beautiful, the most elegant, the most charming, the most accomplished, the most sensible, the most every thing, woman could be; not a creature would have believed, had it been declared from the pulpit of the Trong church, that the poor beggarly thing, whom the naughty Major Buhanun had imposed on his wife, as a relation of his family, and the divine Miss Walsingham, was one and the same person.

After supper, Rosa and Elinor stole up to Lady Denningcourt's apartment; she was fatigued with her journey, and gone to rest; she nevertheless spoke to them; "My country ladies," said she, "knows not what it is to be weary; Lady Hopely will not think
of

of retiring; you are not yet Scotch lasses, therefore don't sacrifice health to any thing."

"If not to be weary will make me a Scotch lass," replied Rosa, "I am already one.—Lady Hopely and her daughters are all life, and the company is delightful."

"Don't, however, let it delight you too much," said she, and after kissing them both, calling them her dear children, she dismissed them.

When they left the apartment, Elinor, throwing her arms round Rosa's neck, after extorting from her a promise to do what she desired, chose herself to retire to rest, but insisted Rosa should return to the company.

Not the smallest trait of her late indisposition remained about Elinor, except when any thing she set her heart on, was opposed. Rosa had observed this, and always cheerfully complied with all her little whims; she therefore rung for Betty, and returned to Lady Hopely, as she desired; and danced reels, or played on a piano-forte, for others to dance in turn, till midnight, when the company, after fixing innumerable parties for the ensuing week, separated, in the highest spirits and good humour.

Rosa's dreams no longer placed her on precipices, trembling at the abyss beneath; no longer tumbled her headlong into dark pits, or left her wandering in the mud without shoe or stocking; her eyes closed but to see visions more pleasing than even reality; Doctor Cameron enfolding her in the strong arm of disinterested friendship; Emma and Jessy Buhanun hanging round her neck; the Burn-side exactly as she remembered it, with Mrs. Walsingham, the Major, and even her long lamented Colonel Buhanun, grouped together there;—then again, the Gauntlet family and connections without a Mrs. Woudbe—the Countess and her children grouped with Montreville and his friends,—herself, equally caressed by both.

After such dreams, could Rosa rise with less beauty and less animation, than she went to rest; rest indeed, she had so completely enjoyed, that she rose at six,

with all her animal spirits in the fullest float of exhilaration.

Elinor's dreams were less pleasant, or her animal spirits, perhaps, not so soon restored. Only one or two servants were yet stirring. Rosa opened the sash of her dressing-room. The objects she greeted with so much pleasure on her entrance, met her eye; she snatched her hat, and without a servant, darted, light as a sylph, to Leith walk.

"My Maistress es nea gootten oop, Mefs," cried a damsel, who answered when she rung at Mr. Steward's door.

"Where are the children?" replied Rosa, walking in; "tell Mrs. Steward an old friend——"

"It is Miss Buhanun's voice," cried Mrs. Steward, starting up.

"You are dreaming woman," answered her husband.

"I will trust my recollection;—her's is a true Scotch voice; there is harmony in her monosyllables;" and Mrs. Steward run half-dressed into her sitting room, where she found it was indeed Miss Buhanun; no longer the harrassed unprotected being she remembered her, but the elegant, easy, fashionable looking gentlewoman.

The endearments of grateful regard on one side, and of warm feeling on the other, having subsided; and Mr. Steward, who, after having been disturbed by his wife's dream had turned and fallen asleep again, enquired after, Mrs. Steward would not have been surprised, she said, to find Rosa entirely under the protection of Lady Hopely; as, notwithstanding the torrents of scandal which were every where propagated against her, after her departure from Edinburgh, the Countess had continued a staunch and firm advocate; but the house of Athelane, with fewer claims on its fortune and affections, with all the known dignity of inborn sentiment, princely extraction, high rank and splendid fortunes, were, in point of honour and patronage, the first in the kingdom; and it was from Mrs. Steward our heroine now heard the particulars
of

of the story so often promised by Major Buhanun, and once begun by the Duke of Athelane.

Mrs. Steward did not remember Wallace Buhanun herself; but her father, who, like the major, described him as the flower of his clan, handsome, courageous, honourable and just, taught her early to weep over his disastrous story. The clan of Athelane imprecated the presumption of young Wallace;—the clan of Buhanun, insisting the blood of their chief was equally noble, although their fortune were sunk, abhorred the local pride of the young Dungaron, and were far from regretting that he fell by the hand of the youth he had insulted.

The inveteracy on either side was far from being appeased, and had the talk of marriage of Mr. Angus the heir of the Athelanes, with the eldest daughter of the heir of Buhanun, taken place, though that event might have appeased one side, it would have irritated the other; well indeed it was that Mr. Angus, by returning to Edinburgh, and being constantly seen there the last autumn, winter and spring, had done away the general suspicion that he was Katie's seducer, since some of the family still remained, who, though they might not have felt themselves particularly implicated in her disgrace from any other quarter, would have thought themselves bound to revenge it on him.

Rosa had now the key to all Lady Denningcourt's conduct; that a child, the offspring of the unfortunate pair, had been born, concealed by the late Duke, and now acknowledged by the surviving parent, was first whispered, then openly confirmed all over Scotland, and the intention of the Duke was also suspected; this child was an interesting object to all the relations of the late Colonel, and Mrs. Steward asked a volume of questions about her.

Rosa gratified not only her curiosity, but her clan-nish pride, by delineating Elinor with the warm colourings of friendship;—after which she had also her questions to ask. Mr. Grazer had been as unfortunate in all his undertakings, since his marriage with the widow Buhanun, as his most implacable enemy could wish.—The widow was more deeply embarrassed than
even

even he could have suspected, and he had not time to determine what to do with himself and her, before Lord Aron Horsmagog was very sorry to inconvenience Mr. Frazer, but he wanted to *lock up* his apartments, and Mr. Simon Frazer, W. S. had a score of obligations served on him by other W. S's. to give bail he would not leave Scotland.

Mr. Simon Frazer intended no such thing, if he could possibly help it; so convening the creditors of the charming widow together, he assigned all her income for the payment of the debts, excepting only the house and lands of Castle Gowrand, where he made his wife so great an œconomist, as to keep the family on the milk, poultry, mutton and corn the farm afforded, and allotted the money allowed for the children's board and education, one half for purchase of such necessaries as were absolutely needful, and the other to make a fund for his own private use, in case he should have the misfortune to lose his wife, whose comforts indeed were not of a complexion to insure longevity.

Rosa could not help feeling exceedingly distressed at this account of the situation of her friend's family; children she considered as losing all the accomplishments she had been so anxious to give them, and their mother actually sinking under the accumulated evils of remorse, mortified vanity and hard living.—She communicated to Mrs. Steward the information she supposed Doctor Cameron must by this time have received from John Brown, and expressed her hope Mrs. Frazer's life might be rendered more comfortable, from the considerable acquisition of wealth in her family.

Mrs. Steward had heard nothing of this, yet she had seen Doctor Cameron very lately, "and I need not," she added, "I suppose swear to you that we have but one subject of conversation when we meet."

Rosa paused—the Duke's information was that John did not return to the castle from Lady Denningcourt; she therefore concluded he was gone to Edinburgh, and could not yet persuade herself he would neglect a business of such importance, whatever reason the doctor might have for concealing it from Mrs. Steward.

After

After two hours delightful interchange of professions of regard, Rosa returned to Queen-street, where she found none of the family, except Lady Denningcourt, had yet left their beds.

As in the regular routine of living at Denningcourt, as well as during the journey, Rosa's attention was almost exclusively paid to Elinor, it was from the Duke of Athelane, Lady Denningcourt had heard the general anecdotes of her life; and when she saw her enter her apartment with the bloom of health on her cheek, and triumph of sensibility in her eyes, she concluded that her early visit had been paid to a former friend, and congratulated her on the satisfaction visible in her countenance.

Rosa had no natural reserve about her; if she had concealments, they were the effect of some unpleasant or local circumstances; but there was nothing to prevent her expressing to one, whose affectionate partiality increased every moment,—her wish to pay a visit to Mrs. Frazer and her family, and once more to behold the scene of former tranquil pleasure on the Burn side.—So far from opposing a desire so natural and laudable, Lady Denningcourt declared she envied the gratifications she would receive:—"Ah! Miss Walsingham," she added, "there is a glen, a burn, a retreat, what would I not give to visit them with the delight you are about to feel; it is true you have lost one loved companion by death, another by change of circumstance; desolation has also visited it; but you are not the innocent cause of all. Go, my charming young friend, enjoy the first blessing of benevolence; visit the poor trifling victim to vanity,—make her and her children little presents; leave an opening to the mercenary husband to suppose that your visits or at least your presents will be repeated; you will by that means insure them some few indulgences; you will find a fund sufficient for all in this pocket-book,—but you are not to thank me—you are my deputy in this business. You know I appropriate a certain sum to acts of benevolence; perhaps you would doubt, if I did not vouch the fact, my fund exceeds the demands in the neighbourhood where an honourable regard to
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my word has cast my lot—I came therefore to my own native land, the no less dear than fatal scene of woes that still rive my aching heart, provided to deserve the blessings of the poor;—not—mark Rosa, and do not feel what I can never mean, a reflection on you,—not the hardy beggar whose clamours wound the ear in the streets; not such as her who could abandon you;—these are not *my* poor; but the industrious unsuccessful artisan; the fond mother who can brave famine herself if her young ones be fed; the deserted orphan; the objects reduced with virtuous unsubdued pride from affluence to need, who search even in the looks of old connection for the slight from which sensibility recoils; yes, Rosa, yes, and her too whose ingenuous confidence, or even whose thoughtless vanity, like your Kattie, has brought to shame,—and even those who, like her more blameable mother, feel the “anguish of a too late gratitude,” who literally swallow ashes and drink tears, in contrasting present misery with former happiness,

“And grieve they have prized them no more.”

These are my poor, and that was your song; you had nothing more novel and fashionable,—but Shenstone’s sonnets must always be felt—and there is an uneducated man in this country whose soul is Shenstonian, though his poetry do not strike so much, because it is not so polished; but the Scotch plough-boy will delight you when you read him in the woods of Athelane, with a Scotch glossary by you, without which you cannot understand half his beauties.—Am I not garrulous this morning?—I think I am; my heart, my dear child, expands when I look at you, and when I remember what a blessing you have restored to me.—Oh Miss Walsingham! you must know the weight of my self-reproach, the anguish,—but, praise heaven, you *never* can know it.

Rosa sat by the amiable speaker, attentive and affected; she kissed her hand, and her heart at least took the position in which she was more than once ready to place her person,—it was prostrate before her.

“Use

“ Use the notes as I recommend, except you have any private objections,” continued the Lady; “ and as the races commence in two days, when every other amusement will also commence, take your friend Mrs. Steward with you, and go to Castle Gowrand in a plain carriage,—little minds are affected more with appearance than reality,—if you visit that poor woman in the state for which perhaps she pines, she will envy your lot and lament her own, without once recollecting there is such a thing as merit in the affair.”

“ Oh madam! how good, how considerate are you to every body.”

“ If you saw me in possession of such blessings and such power as I do possess, would you not despise me if I thought only for myself? come, you are not good at compliments; if you mean really to flatter me, just say, and let it be truth, I have made you happy.”

Rosa had no longer power to repel the impulse of more than respect and affection; she was on her knees, her white arms clasped round the Countess's waist, her fine eyes cast upwards to her face meeting her tender and agitated glances, and both in tears, when Elinor entered and knelt before her.

“ My child, my best girls! sobbed the Countess, “ you must leave me; I am not well,—I want air; ring for Willis, and leave me; I cannot join you at breakfast.”

Rosa flew to the bell, and Elinor, with a face of wonder and concern at the repeated request of the Countess, left the room with Rosa.

Lady Hopely and her charming daughters were by this time assembled;—the young ladies had invitations and parties for the next week, which might take up at least six months at a moderate calculation:—Happy in their parents, their friends, and themselves, the breakfast table was a scene of absolute confusion; they were all laughers, singers and talkers,—and it was scarce removed before the house was again thronged with visitors.

Rosa and Elinor retired to dress, and before the business of the toilet was dispatched, a note was sent to Dr. Cameron with Miss Walsingham's request to see him as soon as convenient.

An English beauty in Edinburgh, need only be seen to be generally talked of; Doctor Cameron, indeed, did not talk; and he was a hearer, though not a partaker, of the raptures the fair stranger inspired.

"Miss Walsingham!" said he—"I have certainly heard that name; the young lady is perhaps ill after her long journey."

The carriage was at the door,—he was going his rounds, and marked Queen-street on his memorandum card.

Rosa was still in her dressing room, the drawing room thronged with company, when Doctor Cameron was announced;—she was down in a moment.

The Doctor was gravely following a servant into the drawing-room, when Rosa threw herself into his arms, even before he had time to see it was the form he most admired on earth.—The Doctor's eyes twinkled, his lips quivered, he turned pale, then red,—and at last uttered, "Miss Buhanun!"

It prudently struck the servant, who was shewing the Doctor up, that a meeting so interesting required no witnesses; and he threw the door of an empty apartment open.

"Dear Doctor Cameron!"

"Dear, and ever dear Rosa Buhanun!" with "how are you?—where did you come from?—what a dear unexpected pleasure!" and the long etceteras of joyful exclamations between dear and long parted friends, at a sudden meeting, being repeated over and over, Rosa was astonished to find John Brown had never made his appearance in, "Auld Reikie," and the Doctor was much, and more agreeably surprized to hear the motive for his being sent thither. A repetition of particulars, before heard from Mrs. Steward, respecting the Frazers, and those Rosa had related to her respecting herself followed.

The Doctor could neither contain, nor express his joy, when he found she was settled in the bosom of

that family he had so ardently wished to see her at the head of, although he made so dear a sacrifice for that end; he confirmed the assertion of Lord Lowder's gentleman, relative to his following her to London, where he had the mortification to find, that the one passenger who alighted from the stage which carried Rosa from Edinburgh, was the house maid of a northern Baronet, who got into it near Durham; and certainly, notwithstanding the zeal and fervent desire both of the Doctor and Mr. Angus, whom he did not just now mention to Rosa, was his companion in the enquiries after her, in and about London, love and friendship, aided by the hundred eyes of Argus, must have given up the chase, as it was literally impossible to find a person in London who was at the same time so busy in Yorkshire.

Rosa mentioned her intention of visiting Castle Gowrand, and once more seeing the Burn side, where she declared, if ever she were rich, she would erect an obelisk in memory of the happy hours she had past there.

The Doctor, smiling, told her, she might if she pleased be rich enough to do that or any thing else; but he had much to say to her of very serious import; and though it was at this time inconvenient for him to leave Edinburgh only for two days, he would have the pleasure to escort her and Mrs. Steward in his own carriage, with post horses, to Castle Gowrand; and he added, "Do not look so grave, for I am not going to make love to you, at least on my own behalf."

This assurance was really a relief to Rosa; she respected and loved the Doctor as a friend, and the most worthy of men, but her heart was not in a disposition to admit sentiments of a more tender nature,—no not if an Adonis had addressed her.—She accepted his offer with a frank good humoured smile, and as he was so kind as to take on himself the arrangements with Mrs. Steward, promised to be ready by five the next morning.

Lady Hopely rallied both the Doctor and Rosa on their private interview; and Elinor innocently asked if
that

that was really her lover, and if she thought he was to be at all compared to poor Croak.

The Ladies Denningcourt and Hopely proposed riding in the evening, while the young party walked; but Elinor, who never could divest herself of a strong degree of *mauvaise honte*, wished to accompany them; then, Lady Mary protested, Susan should not be her companion, for she would have Miss Walsingham with her.

"Rosa loves walking," replied Elinor, "better than riding, and so perhaps does Lady Susan; now as I *must* go out some where, I prefer riding."

"Must, child," cried Lady Mary, "there is no must in any thing of the sort; you may stay at home and read the bible if you please, or what is as well perhaps, look down on us in the promenade;—you permit Miss Athelane to do either, I hope, Lady Denningcourt?"

"No Lady Mary," replied the Countess, coldly, and a little piqued at a certain contempt of Elinor's understanding, which she thought she perceived, "I have every disposition to oblige my daughter, but I like her company, and cannot dispense with it."

Lady Susan then begged also to ride; and the Ladies Mary and Betty Hopely with Rosa walking between them, drew all the Edinburgh smarts after them in the promenade, while Lady Denningcourt took the opportunity of the ride to reconcile Elinor to the parting, for two days, from Rosa, which with no small difficulty she effected; and at five the next morning Rosa stepped into the same carriage which brought her from Castle Gowrand to Edinburgh, when she was received by Mrs. Steward and her friend the Doctor, and set off for Castle Gowrand.

C H A P. XIII.

A short Chapter; containing a Proposal of Marriage, a Memento Mori, and an unexpected Meeting.

DOCTOR Cameron's regard for Rosa was as warm and as generous as ever; he had, he told her, much to say, and Mrs. Steward's presence was no restraint either on him or our heroine.

After adverting to his fruitless excursion to London, he surprised her no less by naming his companion than explaining the motives of the journey.

It was not merely Rosa's confidence and esteem, but her admiration, which were rivetted by the Doctor's manner; he had left his home, risked his practice, and, in some degree, his character; he had sacrificed the first and dearest wish of his soul; and, by a refined and delicate exertion of generosity, changed the fond desire of making her his own, to the more noble hope of seeing her beauty and virtue adorn a rank congenial to her high deserts; yet the reluctant sigh burst from his bosom, a drop of anguish stood on his cheek, while a flow of sensibility conquered his natural taciturnity; and though he pleaded against his own fond bias in favour of a rival, he enumerated with energy the many advantages that awaited her acceptance of Mr. Angus, whose passion he declared, was so far from abating in fervor or sincerity, that all his hope of happiness depended on possessing her; to rank, affluence, and the power to do universal good, he added the person, accomplishments, and disinterested passion of one of the finest gentlemen of the age: the family, rich and liberal in all its principal branches, fondly devoted to this their last and only heir, and ready to receive to their hearts whatever contributed to his felicity; he besought her to consider, that, in accepting the offer of his friend, she had no narrow prejudices

prejudices to combat, no favour to solicit, no explanations to make—Mr. Angus loved her for herself; his own fine sense and taste were the best earnest of the value he would set on hers. “Observe,” he continued, “the noble confidence of this gentleman; he knows you are dear to me—not perhaps how dear, for that is past comprehension—yet he commits to me the interest of his soul. You know his sister;—all his female, as well as male, relations are amiable; you were formed for them, and they for you; your heart is free—I must hope it is. Dearest Rosa, (and the good man’s face lighted up with the heroism of his own conduct) make me happy—say you will be propitious to my friend.

Rosa had assured Doctor Cameron fifteen months since her heart was free; but what revolutions have not taken place in female hearts in a less number of minutes? It is true, Montreville was unworthy; he no longer occupied every moment she could detach from the world, nor was she any longer anxious to prove him, by comparison, superior to all his sex; and, on the contrary, Mr. Angus’s character, though sketched by a friend, could not be too high coloured. She had heard innumerable instances of his goodness of heart and generosity of sentiment since she had resided in the family, and knew how important to them all his happiness and establishment; but she was still conscious of a feeling for the unworthy Montreville, inimical to an attachment to any other man; and therefore the more amiable Mr. Angus, and the more honourable his offered alliance, the more she was bound to decline a heart for which she could not exchange her own.

Doctor Cameron waited her answer with beating heart, quivering lip, and averted eye; he trembled at the gentle hem! which preceded her reply, and involuntarily relinquished the loved hand, which, in the open confidence of friendship, he had been permitted to retain, while, with feelings not easy to define, he heard her firmly declare her high sense of the honour Mr. Angus offered, and the utter impossibility of her accepting it.

The task of honour and friendship were performed; he had pleaded for another with more zeal than he could do for himself; well, she declined disposing of that hand, that heart, dearer to him in that moment than ever, and might he not indulge the secret pleasure of reflecting he was still free to love, to adore her.

Yet could he thus give up the interest he had adopted?—the hope of seeing the idol of his soul as superior in rank as in beauty?—no, Doctor Cameron still loved; but his was the love of urbanity, of honour, and of sentiment: his she would not be; and was she not in a world where the protection of beauty is the destruction of virtue, where the Gauntlets, the Woudbes, the Lowders, were ready to elbow the few Rosas sprinkled up and down the earth out of existence, oh! why then, blind equally to interest and danger, would she reject a good so certain and unequivocal.

Thus in effect reasoned Doctor Cameron during a six hours ride with Rosa, whose adherence to her first declaration might surprise, might hurt him; but he was ready to devour the hand she replaced in his when, with an air and voice that made him giddy, she calmly said, “After having told you, my dear friend, my heart cannot be a party in this treaty, what would you think of your grateful Rosa if she gave up that to rank, riches, splendour, or interest, which she had before refused to intrinsic merit and modest worth like yours?”

The Doctor could not speak, neither could he trust his eyes; had there been a possibility of kneeling with three people in a small chaise, that he would certainly have done; as it was, he had nothing for it but thrusting his head out of the window, and meditating on the wonders of a narrow lane; after which, till the chaise stopped at the gate of Castle Gowrand, the ladies had the chat all to themselves, for the Doctor observed a profound silence.

The Doctor’s servant rang the bell, as servants, who think much of the consequence of their master, and more of their own, generally do—loud and long; and no answer being returned, he repeated his ring till the wire,

wire, which was rusty for want of use, broke, when the Doctor alighted, and with some difficulty pushed open the gates. The chaise then drove up to the door; but was this Castle Gowrand! was this the court yard, now overgrown with long grass, where the wheels of gay equipages once rolled incessantly! were these green slippery steps the snow-white entrance to the lightsome, though ancient hall! Heavens! the windows, once clear as the mountain spring, hung with drapery curtains, shaded by venetian blinds, and ornamented with birds and flowers, are all now close shut up!

Rosa turned pale, and Mrs. Steward red: the former thought some calamity had visited poor Mrs. Frazer or her children—perhaps both; the latter, that Frazer had cheated every body, and run away.

The Doctor had in the mean while entered by the back door into the house, but no answer being returned to his loud knock and call, he found his way to the front door; and having unbolted, unbarred, and unlocked it, encouraged the ladies to enter, as it was plain there were inhabitants belonging to the house, for a pot was over the kitchen fire with barley broth, and a lean cat lay on the hearth.

Rosa, who well knew every part of the house, opened one door after another; the furniture were all in their places, but evidently out of use, except one small parlour, and two bed-chambers; and in one of the latter, to her infinite joy, hung two robes she had made for Emma and Jessy.

As this proved that the family still resided there, the Doctor, recollecting that Mr. Frazer farmed the land, thought it very possible his wife and her daughters were helping to get in the harvest.

Rosa started. “What do you say, Doctor? the relic of Major Buhanun!”

It was Frazer’s wife he spoke of.

“His children, then?”

The Doctor’s lip quivered. “If Miss Buhanun wished to visit the Burn side, the afternoon was fine—

and (he added, firmly) we shall see the children of our deceased friend at our return."

"I promised myself a melancholy pleasure in this excursion," said Rosa;—"melancholy I do indeed feel it; and, God knows, what portion of pleasure it will afford!"

They proceeded towards the Burn side—every step renewing some scene of past pleasure or pain;—how often, hanging on the Major's arm, as she now did on the Doctor's, delighting, and delighted, the lovely girls running now before and now behind, too volatile for a regular pace, had she passed these fields. There was the widow Jonston's wee hoose, where poor Janet Ferguson died, lamenting her "pure Donald," her "bonnie child;" and here the craggy path through the glen, now bordered with primrose and wild strawberries, which she had last passed with beating heart; every step impeded by relics of the fatal storm that desolated the Burn side. This was the point which, when first turned, astonished and delighted her, when last—oh! how sad, how bitter the contrast!—and now—"

"Eh Lorde!" cried Mrs. Steward, "what a heap of people by the side of yon Burn!"

"There's Frazer and his wife," said the Doctor, "and my two wards."

"And who are those nearer the glen?" asked Mrs. Steward.

"No matter," cried Rosa, her heart bounding as she quickened her pace round the corner.

The walks were clean; and though not bordered with exotics, the air was scented by the native flowers.

"This Mr. Frazer has some taste," cried Rosa; "but what (starting back) is this?"

The Doctor was already trying to guess.

At the exact place where the wicket which led to the wee hoose formerly stood, was a black marble pedestal, with a square tablet on the top, on which was engraved,

DONALD

DONALD FERGUSON,
 the honest owner and inhabitant
 of this humble spot,
 was,
 by the providence
 of God,
 translated from his happy dwelling
 on the Burn side
 into the presence
 of Him
 to whom only his integrity
 was known.

Peace to the memory of a man of worth.

“ Oh, Doctor ! this must be you.”

“ I should have been too proud to conceal it.”

“ Has Frazer, then, after all, a foul ?”

“ We shall know presently. There his body stands, so intent on something in the angle of the glen, he does not observe us.”

Rosa dropped a tear on the tablet, and proceeded down the winding path, which concealed the Burn a few paces from their view ; but when again, by a sudden turn, they came near, surprise stopped both the Doctor and Rosa, while Mrs. Steward exclaimed, “ Eh ! what is that ?”

In the midst of clusters of trees, which formerly sheltered the cold bath, a white marble obelisk was seen ; the top of which rose to a spire through the foliage.

“ Here,” said the Doctor, “ is the emanation of another soul, but it cannot be Frazer’s.”

Rosa eagerly advanced. A double row of weeping willows, interspersed with laurels of infantile growth, were planted round the front next the Burn ; the back was inclosed by the rock, and tall trees grew close on each side.

The Doctor perceived the shade of a female figure, and drew back.

Rosa had not observed any thing but the extraordinary object she was bent on viewing nearer, and entered the inclosure.

The base of the obelisk was square, and, like the top, white marble; and as she perceived engravings on all sides, she drew quite close, putting back some of the foliage to give light. On a scroll, running up the marble, was—

Plant the high column o'er the vacant grave,
An hero's honour let an hero have,

On the flat in front—

Sacred to the memory
of
MAJOR BUHANUN :
the early part of whose life
was devoted to the service of his
King,
and the defence of his
Country ;
and
the latter
to
the honour of his
Maker :

On one side—

To him
who lived and died in the practice of
doing justice,
loving virtue,
and
walking humbly before
GOD.

On the other side—

Before she could read the other side, a deep sigh, sounding from behind, startled her; a voice, evidently suppressed by tears, uttered a few inarticulate words —“ Best of men ! this last tribute ”—was all she could understand. A tall elegant figure rose from her knees, slowly advanced, and passed her; she was dressed in a grey silk robe, a white beaver hat, and a deep black laced veil. Rosa felt an hysterical affection rising in
her

her throat ; she followed the female figure, who, supposing it was Mrs. Frazer or one of her daughters that had intruded on her privacy, threw back her veil, and turning round with an air of displeasure, beheld the almost fainting Rosa ; who, the moment the veil was raised, darted forward, shrieking “ Mrs. Walsingham ! oh, ever beloved and respected, is it you ? ”

If, instead of Mrs. Walsingham herself, it had been her ghost, or the Major’s ghost, or Donald’s ghost, or all their ghosts together, the author flatters herself she could, with a little of her own, and a great deal of other people’s fancy, have worked up a scene intolerably terribly terrific ;—but as it really was a corporeal substance, though animated by the essence of purity ; as it was the meeting of two women of congenial spirits, after a long and painful separation, whose attachment to each other was the attraction of similar virtues, whose affection was founded on honour, and cemented by sensibility, those who could feel the transports of such a meeting themselves, will conceive more than the author can write ; those who could *not*, will readily pass on to the next chapter.

C H A P. XIV.

Shewing how a handsome Widow may change for the worse ; how a young Lady may change her mind, and how the mystery of the back stairs was discovered.

MRS. Walsingham’s promised letter to Major Buchanan, coming to Mrs. Frazer’s hands, some time after her second marriage, was too flagrant an exposure of her unjust folly, to be answered.

The Major’s death, of which, with the family anecdotes Mrs. Walsingham heard from a person who went expressly to Scotland for the purpose of inquiring for Rosa, was a blow on her heart, against which Christian fortitude

fortitude could, in the instant, do nothing; and her regret was the more poignant, as every instance of his undeviating honour and friendship, which recurred to her recollection, were embittered by the certainty, that grief for her supposed death, had accelerated his own; and though the impossibility of then tracing Rosa and the imprudence of Kattie, would at any other time have given her a sensible affliction, they were at this moment only subordinate evils; her health became affected, and she was in a low nervous feverish habit, when letters from Lisbon, in answer to those announcing her existence, implored her to take the very voyage her physicians prescribed, and visit the superior of the order of mercy; the same letters stated, that Don Joseph Tavora Alvarez had just lived long enough, after receiving her letter, to leave her the accumulations of her grandfather's fortune from the time of his death and all his personals; the estate, as well as his own, he bequeathed to her son—and as Lady Aurelia most anxiously desired to see her, Magdalena was accompanied on the voyage by her father's friend, Captain Seagrove, leaving every necessary document to prove her marriage, with her son, whose presence was thought necessary in London.

The winter at Lisbon re-established her health; put her in possession of immense wealth, and meliorated her excessive sorrow for her friend.

She arrived in London at the period when the Chancellor referred the proof of her son's legitimacy to the inferior courts, and therefore could not immediately indulge herself in two things, on which her heart was set; the one was, to visit the Burn side—the other, to trace Rosa, if possible, from Edinburgh to wherever she might now be. But though she was obliged to defer seeing the spot, where so many solitary hours had been sweetened by the intercourse of friendship, the romantic turn she had acquired there, was not extinct.

She remembered the address of the artisan, who, under promise of secrecy, made the additions to the Wee House, so exactly correspondent in the external appearance to the one inhabited by the progenitors of Donald Ferguson, and wrote to him, inclosing a draw-
ing

ing of certain mementos she wished erected by the Burn side ; with another drawing as acceptable, and better understood, from Abraham Newland, to pay for materials and workmanship, promising a handsome reward, over and above the charge, if, when the summer was farther advanced, she found her orders well executed.

The man set about the business, with the alacrity such a promise might be expected to inspire ; but as he was not now enjoined secrecy, Mr. Frazer soon heard of it.

“ This mistress of your late husband,” said he to his wife, “ is a great fool, but she is rich, and is coming into this country.”

“ I don’t wish to see or hear of her,” replied Mrs. Frazer.

“ As you please ; but this house is *mine*, and here she *must* be invited.”

No man in Scotland could more successfully enforce the *must* than Mr. Simon Frazer, W. S. and accordingly having had the works, which the inundation had half destroyed, cleaned, and put in order, he set a boy to watch the Burn side, and give him notice of the arrival of the stranger.

“ But I don’t know this lady,” said Mrs. Frazer, peevishly, “ and it can answer no good—.”

“ It is always good,” replied her husband, “ to be in the way of the loaves and fishes.”

But besides not being known to the lady, Mrs. Frazer had many other reasons for avoiding what the *must* of her spouse enjoined.

Deprived of the power to receive, or pay visits ; and no longer the admired leader of fashions, she was become careless, both in person and dress ; she who was never useful, was now flatteringly indolent.

She was allowed one female domestic drudge ; her daughters took care of her chamber, and their own ; and all the apartments, not occupied in this miserable arrangement, were kept shut up.

She had no taste for reading ; nobody to write to, and hated needle-work ; helpless in herself, and insipid

to others, there was no break on the fameness of her existence, but what added to its wretchedness.

She recalled, with anguish, the tender delicate treatment of her former husband before she offended him, and his steady manly conduct afterwards; she could neither silence the reproaches of her own heart for her provoking and ungrateful conduct, nor help enumerating the many instances of his gentle manly forbearance; but repentance was too late—

“ ————E'er folly could subside,

“ Or love return, the great Erasmus died.”

The moments she passed in vain sorrow, kneeling before her lost husband's picture, calling on his name, and embracing her children, though accompanied with tears, were the most pleasing of her comfortless life; the rest were a continued scene of wrangling and recriminations, too loud and violent to be checked by good manners, and often terminating with blows, on the part of the brutal husband, and real indisposition on that of the miserable wife, whose children shared the affliction of their mother.

Emma was of an age to feel and deplore the dismal revolution in her father's family; her mind, which, under the example of a companion she loved, had begun to exhibit traits of female perfection, torn with grief and shame for the imprudence of her beloved mother and sister, and deprived of the elegant resources in which she had hoped to excel, preyed on itself; and her delicate form exhibited the usual melancholy prospect of her premature decay, which her mother trembled to note.

Jessy, the lively little romp, whose beautiful face, though exposed to all weathers, was adorned with a thousand native graces, was Mrs. Frazer's only comfort;—she combed her hair, smoothed her laces, locked the tea chest, and when out of sight of the neighbours, sacrificed her shoon and stockings to please Mr. Frazer.

With the most grievous sense of this mortifying change of circumstances, no temptation of loaves, or fishes, nor even the definitive *must*, could reconcile

Mrs.

Mrs. Frazer to the idea of receiving her late husband's friend at Castle Gowrand ; nor had she taken one preparatory step for that purpose, when Mr. Frazer hastily informed her, " that as the lady was arrived in a fine carriage, which stood at the brig end, she *must* go down to the Burn side to meet her."

Perhaps, had not Emma's respiration became more quick with joy, had not Jessy scampered away for her shoon and stockings, making the roof ring with, " And are ye sure the news is true?" Mrs. Frazer would have resisted the *must*, even at the peril of a few blows ; but her children's comforts were so unmercifully curtailed, she had not the heart to disappoint them.

The one lass and boy, who had the honour to be Mr. Frazer's domestics, understood some strange sight was at the Burn side, so leaving the barley broth on the fire, and the lean cat on the hearth, they followed their maister and maistress to speer.

The meeting of Mrs. Walsingham and Rosa, was an intellectual banquet, to which, however great their mental appetite, they did not forget to invite the children of him, whose spirit they tenderly apostrophised. —Mrs. Walsingham, by whom they had been already embraced, called to them. At the sight of Rosa, Jessy threw an old straw bonnet, which hung on her arm, into the burn, and the delicate sickly Emma sunk into her mother's arms.

The effect of joyful surprises are not very terrific ; —Mrs. Frazer's eyes were fixed on the slow moving burn while Mrs. Walsingham embraced her children ; but she wept with joy at the sight of Rosa, whose endearments soon revived her daughter ; " Ah my Kattie !" sighed she, " if my Kattie were but here."

The doctor had his share of welcome ; Jessy quite hung round his neck ;—and Mrs. Steward, as a Buchanan, was included in the joyous gratulation ;—nor was Peggy, the niece of Donald, who attended her mistress, forgotten.

Mr. Frazer scented the loaves and fishes ; and as he had safe, under treble lock, some old stores of the Major's, he invited the whole party to Castle Gowrand,

rand, and hasted forward himself, to prepare for their reception.

Mrs. Frazer whispered Jessy, who, scampering off in a moment, got before Mr. Frazer; and when the company arrived, the windows were unbarred, the hall door wide open, and though it was July, large faggots and coals blazing in every chimney in the house.

It was not the ill-dressed, and ill-served supper, that overspread the faces of Mrs. Walsingham and Rosa with melancholy; but the hospitable entertainer was no more; the heart which was warmed with every social virtue, had ceased to beat; and recollections would intrude, which could neither be repressed nor concealed. They pleaded fatigue, and were early attended to their chambers by the light-footed Jessy and followed by the pensive Emma.

The apartment designed for Mrs. Walsingham, was that occupied by the Major, previous to his removal to Edinburgh. Rosa could not forget the place where she had passed so many anxious hours: she started, and wept.

Mrs. Walsingham, though ignorant of the cause of her emotion, was little less affected. Emma, whose heart adverted to the sad era of departed happiness, looked like an expiring angel; and Jessy sat down, crossing her sun-burnt arms on her bosom.

"I thought, Rosa," said Mrs. Walsingham, after a silent flood of tears, "to have heard how you have passed your time since our separation, and to have told you some things about myself; but we are neither of us fit for conversation, and cannot dismiss these dear children. Jessy shall be my bed-fellow—let Emma be yours; we shall have time for mutual communication when these interesting objects are not present."

Up jumped Jessy, and flying round Mrs. Walsingham's neck, cried out, "Oh, my own paupau's dear friend! he aw ways said you wud be gude tull hes pure lassies. Emma fes she wull nae stay wuth mauma and me—she will gang tull heavene tull dear paupau; but she munna dee—you wull nae lete her dee—lete her gang with you tull the sooth."

"Can

"Can you part from your Emma, Jessy?" asked the fair invalid.

"Ay, indeed, Emm, I had rather perte wuth you tull the sooth, tull you gete beter, than lete you gang tull heavene tull dear paupau."

Rosa could not speak; she courtied to Mrs. Walsingham, and went with Emma to her old chamber; whence the hectic symptoms of her bed-fellow, and her own painful retrospects, banished sleep.

The Doctor, who saw with pain the state of Emma's health, took the opportunity of the ladies' retiring, to speak to Frazer; and as he proposed taking her as a visitor to his sister's, prevailed on him to consent to her going to Edinburgh; and the large fortune likely to come into the family from Colonel Buhannon, put him in such good humour, that he offered to let Jessy accompany her sister, if her mother consented, as it was only on a *visit*.

Mrs. Frazer, in the mean time, invited Mrs. Steward to sit half an hour with her; and though that good woman despised her folly, she could not refuse to accept it.

A female visitor was a comfort, from which poor Mrs. Frazer was now entirely debarred, and the opportunity accident gave her of venting her grief into a feeling bosom, was not lost: she spoke in such sad, though animated terms of her first husband, and blended her regrets for him, with such lamentations for the injury his children sustained, that, instead of making a foe of a friend, as had been her custom, she had the good fortune to change an inveterate foe into a compassionate friend; Mrs. Steward thought no more of former errors; all that occupied her in respect to Mrs. Frazer was, her present misery.

Mrs. Walsingham was agreeably surprised when she understood the Doctor had anticipated her wish in regard to Emma, as his house, both as her guardian and for the advantage of medical skill, was at present the most eligible for her.

Jessy insisted she was glad Emma was ganging sooth, she was sae seek.

Rosa

Rosa could not imagine how it happened that Emma's dialect, though Scotch, was so lady-like, while Jessy's was so much on a par with the common people.

The cause, Mrs. Steward said, was too obvious; her ear was good, and her conversation among those common people. Mrs. Frazer gives herself up—Emma is in ill health—and what, with such a fund of spirits, can poor Jessy do, but talk to those who will talk to her, and run wild among inferior people.

The Doctor's lip quivered—. “This evil,” said he, “is not past remedy—the children of my friend shall not be lost.”

“You will, however, remember, Doctor, the comfortless state of the poor mother.”

“Why else have I proposed taking only Emma to Edinburgh?”

Mrs. Walsingham complimented him on the equal wisdom and humanity of his conduct: she trusted the evil was *not* past remedy; and whenever a consultation became necessary, she hoped she would call in Doctor Walsingham and Doctor——”

“Walsingham junior—don't be surprised my dear madam—I thought you had done with Walsingham;—and so, when”—Rosa stopped; but perceiving neither Mr. nor Mrs. Frazer were yet present, she proceeded—“when I found I disgraced the name of Buchanan, I resigned it, and took that I expected you had dropped.”

Never was astonishment more strongly depicted than in the countenance of Mrs. Walsingham.

“Stop!” she cried—“let me be certain I hear right. Say not another word, least the hope that raises my soul to the skies be crushed. You have assumed the name of Walsingham—great and gracious God!—you left Edinburgh last summer—don't answer—I cannot bear to believe you *can* answer,—to strike me dumb for ever—I could not outlive the disappointment of my hopes. You travelled through Yorkshire—you undertook a task no human being could accomplish, that of informing the mind of a rude girl, who already thought of marriage—Oh! dear, dear
Rosa!

Rosa ! don't interrupt me—you fell into strange company, and—and—”

“ Now, at least,” cried Rosa, “ I may answer you :—all this did certainly happen, though I am surprised to hear it from you ; but the strange company I met was my own mother, and her second husband.”

—“ Your mother ! why she told me you was a stranger. Ah ! if I had then known you had left Scotland, I must have been sure the description I heard could belong only to you. But, my Rosa ! my sweet Rosa ! if this woman—this *naughty* woman, then, was your cruel mother, did she not know you ?”

Rosa perceived Mrs. Walsingham had heard of her mother's conduct. “ I was,” she replied, “ certain she was my mother, but I could not wish to make it known.”

“ You were right—perfectly so. But Rosa—dear, dear girl ! I am mortified you do not divine the question I long to ask :—did you fall into no other strange company, in a strange way ? You blush, my amiable, my ever-destined child ;—say, did you not also meet an elegant, graceful, accomplished, handsome——Oh, Rosa ! let me be garrulous in his praise, and do not withhold yours for the friend, the élève of your patron, him, to whom in his last hours he bequeathed you, who has sought you at Penry in vain—”

“ Mr. Littleton !”

“ Yes, Mr. Littleton—my son.”

“ Oh, my dear friend ! what do you say ? Mr. Littleton your son !”

“ Not Mr. Littleton, but Horace Montreville, the Earl of Gauntlet, the heir of the most respectable old officer in the kingdom ; he is Horace Littleton, Colonel Buhanun's favoured friend, and my son.”

Rosa changed colour—she gasped for breath—what an explanation was here ! Littleton, who had inquired for her at Penry ; Montreville, once so amiable, now so unworthy, the same person and son to the amiable woman so dear to her heart !—graceful ! amiable ! accomplished !—well might maternal fondness paint him thus ! “ And was it you, then, madam, who entered into Pontefract, amid the acclamations of the people ?
did

did I pass your carriage? and did not my heart acknowledge you?"

"Your heart was, I hope, at that moment too busy to think on me."

It was at least busy enough now; nor was it only hers that was painfully agitated;—the Doctor was all earnest attention—this *handsome, graceful, accomplished* being interested *him*.

Rosa felt a faint sensation; her ears rung, and her sight failed; she could just ask for water before she reached the sash of the window.

Magdalena, for we must no longer call her Walsingham, saw and felt an emotion, which she flattered herself proceeded from excess of joy. Her son was, in her fond estimation, every thing that was amiable; could he then have failed to make an impression, where it was so much his wish?

Rosa was removed into the air; and when she recovered, wept violently.

"There is no such thing as perfect happiness, else I must now feel it," cried Magdalena. "How have I regretted the fatality that threw my son into the society of a woman whom notwithstanding appearances were in every respect against her, he adored! what arguments, what persuasions, what adjurations have I not vainly used to wean him from a passion I thought not only unfortunate but dishonourable, because the good man, to whom he owed more than life, left him joint heir with you to his fortune! If he had seen you, I knew he must have loved you. Never were two minds so well paired: the fortune is not a consideration, but you, Rosa, are *my* choice as well as his; and now I find, that among the miracles of my eventful life it is not the least, that Providence has directed my son to the woman whom, above all others, is most acceptable to his mother, and to whom he was bound, by honour and gratitude—I dare not indulge my joy, Rosa—I fear your heart is cold; and if it be, my son, my only child, will be miserable."

Magdalena's dignity was absorbed in melting agony.

"Your eyes, Rosa, your speaking eyes greet not my feelings; but I amaze, yes, I perceive I also interest

terest your friends ; let the carriage be ordered an hour later, and hear the sufferings of the solitaire of the Burn side. It is a justification I owe the memory of the father of these dear children, and you can never hear it at a more interesting moment."

Every being present were indeed anxiously interested, and expressed a proper sense of the gratification which, with grace, feeling, and energy, she offered them.

"Such had been the distraction and terror of the miserable Magdalena, she had not heard, or did not remember, the names of her protectors ;—she had indeed so much recollection as served to relate the story of her wrongs to them ; but the guilt of murder on a mind, in which the sense of religious duties was stronger than even maternal affection, after the first unfortunate shock, left no attention to local circumstances ; and when put on board the yacht by Lord Vallerton, she was even ignorant of her destination ; for though escaping from an ignominious death, to escape from herself was impossible.

"The yacht, as reported, was lost on the Scotch coast, and Magdalena, the only person who survived, equally fearing and loathing the thought of returning to the world, we have seen her mind tranquillized in a solitude, where, but for one congenial spirit, she would have shared the fate of her servant Donald.—The Major, though he had been forbid to talk to her of the affairs of the great world, except where he was himself particularly interested, sometimes carried a newspaper in his pocket, and read particular selected passages ; one of these, which he had left, happened to attract her notice,—the front column presented the advertisement for evidence relative to her own marriage and her son's birth.

"What a revolution in her system did this important paper produce ; all her maternal feelings were renovated ; her son was probably in existence ; and even if ignominious death awaited her, how poor a sacrifice was life in exchange for the blessing of seeing her son, and seeing him restored to his native right ;—but while she resolved to risk every thing for her child, she did
not

not forget the falshood and injustice she had herself met with, nor the many instances of art, by which the victim, of whom she read, fell into the toils of their enemies. Taking, therefore, Peggy as her only attendant, she directed Donald to order a chaise to wait for her at the bridge end, half a mile from his dwelling, and without hinting at the purport of her journey, where she was going, or the time of her absence, braved the encreasing storm and left her solitude four hours after the Major took a last leave of her, and arrived without accident in London.

“ Her first enquiry was after Mr. Adderly ; that good man, as full of honour as of years, was yet living, but not in town. She would not dare to write ; and though time must have altered her person, feared to be seen ; she therefore, after concealing herself in an obscure part of the town, set off to Bath, where she was told the good banker was :—He had unfortunately left that city on a visit to a nobleman in Devonshire, whither she feared to follow him ; so that some months had elapsed before the moment arrived which terminated her misfortunes.

The instant she made herself known to Mr. Adderley, she heard her husband had died a natural death, and that her son, acknowledged by her father, was suing for his natural right with every prospect of success ;—he had, he said, been paid every way by the Admiral for the services he had been so happy as to render his daughter, but he would now render him one for which no adequate payment could be made ; he would have the pleasure of restoring to a respectable parent his only child.

Admiral Herbert received her with wonder and transport ; and she found her son even more than a mother’s fondest wish ;—when last indeed she saw him, she pressed the rosy lip of a cherubim, but he was now pale, languid and indisposed.

Magdalena’s soothing tenderness won the confidence of her son, and it was with infinite pain that she understood his indisposition was the consequence of an internal struggle between a sense of honour and a passion he had found irresistible.

Colonel

Colonel Buhanun had, in his last moments, received his word of honour, if not rejected by his protégée, to unite his fate with hers; and though the copy of a will left in England, with a codicil, leaving him joint heir with the young lady to his fortune, had been seized in the plunder at Bedanore, and though his own fortune was now so large, he had made enquiries after her, with intention to offer himself to her acceptance, before he saw her on whom his fate now hung.

His surprise to find his mother knew the Colonel's protégée, did not equal her sorrow that *he* had not *also* known her. She however, in compliance with his earnest entreaty, went herself to Pontefract to judge of the merit of his paragon; but she found Mrs. Garnet pining for the loss of her name-sake, and ignorant of every thing concerning her.

This was a heavy disappointment to her son; but gave her hope, that the enchantress, whom she concluded was ~~an~~ an adventuress, having thus vanished, the charms of Rosa must supersede the light impression of a travelling heroine; and she was preparing to accompany him to Edinburgh, when her father's indisposition detained her at the Grange; but sanguine in her hope, and anxious he should acquit himself with honour to his deceased friend, she gave him credentials, and he set off to Edinburgh, charged with commission to bring Rosa to the Grange; it was from him she heard of the Major's death, the marriage of his widow, Kattie's elopement, and Rosa's leaving the family.

And here ended Magdalena's narrative, which received, as it deserved, the thanks of the company;—Rosa only was silent; she had wept over every misfortune of her friend's life: warm'd with her friends; abhorred her enemies; trembled for her danger; exulted in her escape, and felt, as if herself, cheered by the paternal kindness that received and welcomed the wanderer home; but the coldness with which she attended to all the interests of her son, could not escape the observation of Magdalena.

How indeed, with Mrs. Woudbe and the signature of the "adoring H. Montreville" full in her mind's eye, could she be otherways than cold to praises so
animated

animated, which flowed from maternal enthusiasm, on a man whom she considered as the most specious, as well as deceitful, of his sex.

Yet, should the pleasing illusion be torn from the heart of the fond mother by her ! should she be the first to announce to the most amiable and respectable of women, that there were yet sorrows in store for her ; that the honour of her principles were fated to receive a wound it would require all her piety and resignation to sustain ? Ah ! no,—let the hard truth come from one who would not, like her, feel the pang both as inflictor and sufferer.

“ Propitious, my dearest Rosa,” said Magdalena, “ to my beloved Horace be your silence ; but I urge no more ; you are not the frank, the generous Rosa, I once knew ; your heart is cased in cold reserve ; you do not approve, nay, you dislike the most honourable and amiable young man in the world, in whose eyes you are a paragon. I say nothing of his fortune ; I know you too well.”—

Rosa was still silent ;—it was indeed not possible to answer without wounding the sensibility of a mother, or violating her own veracity.

“ Enough,” said Magdalena, and visibly checking herself, no longer mentioned her son.

Rosa was ready to add her narrative to that of her friend, but it was not required.—

“ I am rich, Rosa,” said Magdalena, after a short silence : “ My father’s fortune is very large ; my son, who is his heir and the heir of his own father, has a more splendid estate than either, independant.”

Rosa was surprised,—“ Good God !” she exclaimed, “ can then the turpitude.”—she stopped.

“ What turpitude ? to what do you allude, Rosa ? —What ! dumb again.—Well, I was not vaunting of prospects ; I meant only to let you know, that when you would accept it, it would be my happiness to accommodate you, and that I could do it without inconvenience.”

Rosa never felt the blessing of Lady Denningcourt’s protection so much as at this moment ; as without it she might have been reduced to accept pecuniary obligations

ligations from the mother of the rich Montreville, in whose behalf the wishes of that mother, of her friend, the Major's friend, were so irksome, that the ordering the carriages was a relief; and thus the meeting so desired, so beyond hope, and which she had long looked to as the end of misfortune, was terminating with coldness on one side and anger on the other.

The carriages were now again announced; Mrs. Frazer's respect for the character she had traduced, took from her all power to apologize—

The Doctor looked at Magdalena with admiration, and Mrs. Steward thought her a first female character;—their eyes followed her, as she walked slowly to her carriage, leading Emma and followed by Peggy.

Rosa had almost forgotten Lady Denningcourt's commission; she took out her pocket book—

"I have done every thing, whispered Magdalena."

"I am only the agent of another heart as kind, as generous as your own."

"My heart, Rosa, is really kind to *you*."

"Oh how can I ever doubt—"

"Yet you are reserved; you dare not trust me."

Rosa was silent.

"Obstinate! inexorable!—Come Emma, we will not divide Rosa from her friends."

When they had lost sight of the bowing Mr. Frazer, his weeping wife, and could no longer hear Jessy's loud fare ye wells, "How came it, my dear," cried Mrs. Steward, "that in the history you were so good as to give us of your adventures, you did not mention this all-accomplished cavalier, who proves to be your friend's son!"

Rosa replied, it was not necessary, when she spoke of a gentleman who rescued her from danger, to do it with the enthusiasm of maternal tenderness.

"Happy man!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"It was him then!—Well, I say with the Doctor, happy man; he is I perceive your fate."

Rosa firmly answered—"No."

Doctor Cameron settled himself comfortably on the seat.

"Is he like his mother?" Mrs. Steward asked.

The resemblance would not have struck Rosa, but his eyes were like, and his figure as fine.

“Then he is handsome!”

“Extremely.”

“And graceful?”

“Perfectly.”

“And accomplished?”

“I think so.”

“And yet my dear.”—

“And yet, Mrs. Steward, he is not my fate.”

“The road,” the doctor observed, “was remarkably pleasant.”

As the day was so far advanced, they did not stop to dine, but meant to take a slight repast, after crossing the ferry.

Magdalena was solemn and reserved; Rosa silent, but affectionate.

As it would be late when they reached Edinburgh, Magdalena gave her card at “Steele and Montgomerie’s:”—Rosa returned hers at Lady Hopely’s:—and the doctor agreeing to call for Emma, after setting Rosa down, they got into the carriages, and kissed hands as the roads separated at the entrance of Edinburgh.

Rosa had been silent during most part of the way from the ferry, and she burst into tears when she lost sight of Magdalena’s carriage.

A few minutes set her down at Lady Hopely’s door, and before it closed, Lady Hopely appeared, with so much unpleasant meaning in her countenance, that Rosa exclaimed, “Dear madam, I fear to ask——.”

“Ah my dear!” replied Lady Hopely, leading her in; “here is sad work; that poor girl is more mad than ever; she will not speak to her mother; and we fear she has even taken a dislike to you.”

Rosa did not stay to hear more; she flew to Elinor’s room, and to her grief and astonishment found Lady Hopely’s fears verified: Elinor turned from her with disgust, went into an adjoining room, and absolutely refused to admit her.

“I protest,” said Lady Hopely, “I do most sincerely wish Lady Denningcourt may, if this fit continues,

tinues, send her to some private mad-house, she will else actually be her death."

Rosa now hastened to Lady Denningcourt, whom she found in dishabille, with swollen eyes and wan countenance, talking with a tall, fresh coloured woman; who, though her hair was as white as snow, had all her sound white teeth, and seemed listening, with attentive feeling, to the sorrowing mother.

"Oh my dear Miss Walsingham," she cried, "my misery is complete, if Elinor has really taken an aversion to you."

Rosa wept.

Lady Denningcourt was grieved to tell her, that though it was the doctor's opinion her absence had hurt the poor girl, he was himself at a loss to account for so sudden a change; and beside, that her madness was literally a madness with method: she pretended to have been deceived, and therefore suffered nobody but Betty to approach her: she was twice surprised by Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, the elderly person who now courted to Rosa, telling her money, of which she had a considerable quantity; for it was now first recollected, that though when in her most gloomy fits, nothing was so acceptable to her as money, she never laid any out.

Hoping to win on her, by what she seemed to like so well, her mother had given her a card purse full of guineas; she took the purse, but her behaviour was the same.

The doctor thought that the constant routine of company disturbed her, and advised leaving Edinburgh, which Lady Denningcourt resolved to do in a very short time;—she had, in the mean while, sent for Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, on whom she could depend, to assist Betty, as they had left the attendant at Denningcourt.

Rosa hoped this, like her other sudden fits, would go off; but the doctor's opinion did not confirm that hope; he was actually staggered;—she eat, drank, and was perfectly collected, but refused to sit in a room, or be seen by any body but Betty

Such extraordinary symptoms, naturally led to an inquiry of her preceding conduct. She had been

cheerful, though anxious, after Rosa's departure; had sat with Lady Hopely's daughters, and walked to the library at the cross with Lady Susan, before dinner, to look out some new books. In the evening, as she objected to the promenade, she took one of the new books, Lady Susan another, and they crossed the street to the fields. Presently Lady Susan, who was reading so attentively, that she had got a few paces on, heard a shriek, and turning short, saw Elinor had dropped her book and stood still, trembling and pale. She went to her immediately;—two or three common people were about, but none, as she thought, near enough to have frightened her. She, however, could not or did not, assign any cause for her emotion; and Lady Susan, who was now more frightened than herself, sent a woman to her mother for assistance;—but it was with reluctance, and not till she saw the doctor, of whom she stood in some fear, she would suffer herself to be led home.

Lady Hopely was vexed and disappointed. As the Dowager resolved, on returning home, she would not, she said, burthen her friends with her calamity:—if her daughter recovered this fit, she might have another at Athelane, where the Duke was, at this time of the year, in the habit of giving splendid entertainments. She grieved that Miss Walsingham should be disappointed, but was resolved to atone for the injury her child sustained, from a deprivation of early maternal care, by devoting her life and fortune to hers, whatever might be her fate. She hoped the dreary prospect would not appal Miss Walsingham; for she confessed that *her* society seemed like a pearl in the cup of affliction; living, she would study her happiness in return: for that she would certainly receive from her;—and dead, she would liberally requite her.

The world had as few charms for Rosa, as for Lady Denningcourt;—she could not see so elegant and amiable a woman, almost in the prime of life; devote herself to sorrow, without feeling a sensation of sympathy mixed with affectionate respect; and declared it would be the pride of her existence, to meliorate the affliction it had pleased heaven to inflict; and certain
it

it is, she did, from that hour, meliorate every painful sensation in the bosom of Lady Denningcourt.

This night, like the last, Elinor refused going to bed with any other person in the room. "Betty might sleep in the closet;" and as she had rested well after this indulgence, it was repeated; with the precaution however, of nailing down the lower sashes of the window.

Of this, she at first complained, for want of air; but as the upper sashes let down, she was soon easy.

The next morning, Rosa wished to wait on Magdalena; but Lady Denningcourt was so much indisposed, and so anxious to have her reports of Elinor who however would hardly speak or look at her, that she found it impossible.

In the height of a domestic affliction, to which Lady Hopely sacrificed all her visitors, and which her daughters were too amiable not to feel, it would also be improper for her to receive company at home, and therefore she wrote cards of excuse to Doctor Cameron, Mrs. Steward, and Emma; but it was not till after blotting near a dozen sheets of paper, with mingled tears and ink, she could resolve on one to send Magdalena.—She simply stated, that a domestic misfortune in the family where she had the honour to reside, prevented her from seeing her, whom she never could cease to love:—begged her favourable thoughts, and lamented a cause, which certainly did exist, why her heart must appear inaccessible to the friend who was so dear to her; to this she received the following answer:—

My dear Rosa,

—"I have not slept since I parted with you;—but I have been used to court sleep in vain;—there was nothing new therefore in that;—I perceive there is a *cause*, but whether it is a *reason*, time will prove:—my carriage is at the door:—my letters by this morning's post demand my presence in London, and I only waited to see or hear from you:—tell me if Lady Hopely's is your permanent address:—need I say you will hear again of—

H. MONTREVILLE."

Rosa immediately returned a short note and inclosed Lady Denningcourt's address, easier in the idea, that Magdalena was obliged to leave Scotland, than if she had remained near, without the possibility of a free intercourse, and without a disposition to wish it.

The evening of a day that afforded no ray of hope in respect to Elinor, was now shutting in; and Rosa was slowly passing her door, toward Lady Denningcourt's, when she popped her head out, just to say, "Rosa, you have deceived me, but I forgive you," and closed it instantly. Rosa sighed, went on, and sat with the Countess till the hour of rest; when having looked in on Elinor, she returned to her own chamber.

What sort of sleepers Lady Hopely's domestics might be, does not appear; but no doubt the kitchen maid, whose business it was to clean the steps, was surprised to find the door on a jar at six o'clock next morning; as the police however of Edinburgh is so excellent, that few night robberies are known there, she thought it might be accident, and so let it rest with herself. Before eight however, the house was alarmed by a violent knocking and calling, from the closet where Betty slept.

Lady Denningcourt, whom care rendered wakeful, was the first, and Rosa, who was reading and inhaling the pure air of her window, the second, to hear it; they ran into Elinor's chamber terrified with forebodings of some mischief, and found Betty a fast prisoner in the closet; the door being locked and bolted outside.

"What whim is this, my dear child?" said Lady Denningcourt, approaching the bed, where the curtains were drawn round:—but no Elinor was there.

Lady Denningcourt fell on the floor speechless; and Rosa, filled with the most fearful apprehensions, ran from room to room, calling on Elinor, dear Elinor:—no Elinor answered.

The kitchen maid, amid the general alarm, revealed her secret about the door:—the apprehensions for Elinor increased:—every servant, and as many chairmen as could be found, were dispatched different ways:—but while Rosa held volatiles to Lady Denningcourt,

court, who fell from one fainting fit into another, and the ladies all sat in momentary expectation of some dreadful catastrophe, the house maid brought in an odd glove, a pocket handkerchief, and a small packet of papers, dropped in going down the back stairs, by Elinor, which on being opened, developed the whole mystery; and proved that by this time her madness had ended in "*amazement*."

PAPER I.

" *My dear Elinor,*

" I am so overjoyed, I don't know how to write. I saw you at the Cross to-day, but you did not know me. If you can open your window when it is dark, and let down a string, any weight tied to it, I will tie a letter which you may draw up—I won't venture to say more."

PAPER II.

" Oh, my dear love! Providence or love sure gave me the power to put my note on your book, and contrived this method of telling you what I have suffered since you was taken from me. I was sent to my father's like a thief, who you, my dear love and friend, knows was no father. I hope I never shall lift my hand against him; but he used me like a dog, and kept me tied, on bread and water, till two men came and took me to London in a coach, and then I was happy, because I thought I would beg my way to Cumberland;—but oh, my dear love! I was in prison—my own father swore a debt against me;—to be sure he paid my board, but what was that, or a golden crown, without you, my dear love? Providence knew I meant no hurt, only to have my dear love;—so I was released by a serjeant, who was recruiting for the regiment, now on duty here; who, before my cruel father knew any thing of the matter, paid the debt, and took me away. I was preparing to desert, if it cost my life—for what is life without my dear love? when I met you. Oh, my dear love, now you are in the country, where you may do what you please;—you remember what you have promised to one who has no friend but his dear love—such an opportunity will ne-

ver come again; and indeed, my dear love, I had rather die at once than lose you, my own love. I shall stay here under the shade of the wall, till you drop an answer; and as I have got paper and pen and ink ready, can write any thing by the lamp lights to my dear love."

PAPER III.

"God Almighty bless my dear love! I will pray for you night and day. Thirty pounds is the price of the discharge—what you dropped is a great deal more than will be wanting. I will go directly about it—God for ever bless my dear love!"

PAPER IV

"All is done—I have bought the clothes, and am now dressed in them—it is not the first time you have given me a coat to my back. I shall have the chaise exactly at four—not earlier, else we shall be at the place too soon; where I agreed for a parson, and then we will go on all the way, my love."

PAPER V

"All is ready—put on the gown boldly—it is exactly the colour—and you are near the size of the maid :—I shake from top to toe."

To conceive the astonishment of the ladies at reading these letters is impossible.

"I do remember," cried Lady Susan, "there was a foldier passed us at the time."

"So, then," said Lady Mary, "Miss Athelane is really——"

A look from her mother stopped her.

"My dear Countess," cried Lady Hopely, "you don't speak—what do you say to this?—what shall we do?"

Lady Denningcourt at once revived;—no longer terrified by the momentary expectation of hearing some fatal news of Elinor, the elopement was rather welcome, as a relief from fear of something worse.

"Recall all your people in the first instance," she replied, "that so bad an act may not disgrace your amiable daughters, and my as amiable Rosa. There is no derangement in this business—it is her own deliberate

rate act;—I have already taken my resolution—I can never associate with these Croaks, or their sort—nor would my unhappy child have ~~ever~~ been at ease with me or my sort. I will immediately settle a handsome annuity on her; but if her children be my heirs I will educate them. Rosa, I brought this poor girl into the world in sorrow; she could not feel affection for a mother, whom she only knew as the being who deprived her of all she loved. I felt this at the moment; but though I strove to attach her to me, by every act of indulgence, my love for her was the love of duty *that* has not nor ever will be abated; but there are certain comforts in looking forward to a dear and amiable companion; and while *you* remain with me, that comfort will be mine;—you are dearer to me than I *can* express—*you* will not leave me?”

“Never, never!” cried Rosa dropping on her knees.

“No, I will be bound for her,” said Lady Hopely, delighted to find an event, which at first she feared would have a fatal effect on her friend, received with such temper and resignation.

“*Never* is too long a period for you, my dear Rosa, to promise, or your bondswoman to engage,” cried Lady Mary. “I’ll lay my life of something just come into my head.”

“I know what is come into *my* head,” cried Lady Susan—“we shall be the talk of Edinburgh.”

“And therefore let us leave it before the races!” cried Lady Mary.

Lady Denningcourt was grieved, but she knew her friends too well to suppose any apology necessary from them: she instantly ordered her people to get ready—Lady Hopely did the same, urging her friend to accompany her to Hopely; but as Lady Denningcourt had determined on not going to Athelane, and as she wished to consult the Duke before any establishment was formed for her daughter, she declined the invitation; and by twelve o’clock left Edinburgh with Rosa in her carriage—the good Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin had part of the doctor’s chaise; and as they travelled post, reached Denningcourt by dinner on the third day.

C H A P. XV

A Wedding—Mrs. Feversham in her element—Mrs. Brown in the dumps—and an Old Woman peeping through her spectacles to the denouement of the Beggar's History.

ROSA's endeavours to prevent Lady Denningcourt's thoughts from dwelling too intensely on the conduct of her daughter during the journey, were even more successful than she could have hoped;—she was indeed happily in possession of anecdotes which could not tire her auditor:—every remembrance of Colonel Buhanun; every letter he had wrote; the minutest particular respecting him was interesting; and though it was her wish to avoid ever adverting to Montreville, yet his early anecdotes were so blended with her own story, that she got entangled in the course of her conversation, and could neither proceed nor retreat, without introducing both his story and his mother's.

“My dear child,” cried the Countess, in astonishment, “what is this you are telling me? are you not exercising a pretty inventive fancy?”

“Inventive!” repeated Rosa deeply blushing, from an idea that Lady Denningcourt knew the young man.

“It appears so extraordinary, so incredible to me,” replied her ladyship, “that I can hardly believe you have been speaking of certain facts;—the mother of this young man living!—saved from shipwreck!—so long a solitary recluse in Scotland!—my father, Rosa, the late Lord Denningcourt and myself, were the happy protectors of that injured woman.”

“You madam! good heavens! but you certainly are, in some shape or other, connected with all good people, and an active party in all good actions.”

“Not quite all, my dear;—but this is a pleasure I could never have expected, and I owe you a vast deal for the information;—I am now indeed interested in the event of the law-suit.”

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When the carriage drove up to the entrance of the jointure-house, Lady Denningcourt expected the Duke of Athelane would have been, as usual, ready to welcome her home, as the out-rider she had sent to announce her return, must have arrived; but before she had time to express her surprise that he did not, the unopened letters addressed to him from herself, which lay on his table, proved that he had left the jointure-house.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, who, the moment she alighted, had enquired hoo her gude lorde duke ded? followed with, "Eh my lady, dianna ai coonsel ye tull gang tull Athelane?"

"Why sure my uncle is not returned thither?"

"Trothe es he, my lady."

"And my niece?"

"Endeed es she."

"And Margaret Bruce?"

"Hoot! hoo caun ye doot thaut? ye ken she's aw way the shade ow of Mefs Angus."

Lady Denningcourt was amazed; according to her calculation this was the day of the grand ball *al fresco*, which was to conclude the marriage festivals. The house-keeper was rung for; but as she only knew the wedding had not taken place, it is fit the reader should be better informed.—The story was this.

Mr. Josiah Turgid succeeded his uncle in five thousand pounds, and a set of warm clients; he had therefore a fortune and character ready made to his hand.

Mr. Lemuel Supple, on the contrary, had no more coats than backs, and both very bare;—when at a Westminster election, he being a pot walloper, though in the one garret he kept for his family use out of a house for which he paid, or agreed to pay twelve pounds per year, no such thing as a pot and very seldom a fire was seen: but a pot-walloper he unquestionably was, and a glorious harvest he made of this same election; for it was Supple here, Supple there; Supple do this: swear that; and all they said, that and more did Mr. Lemuel Supple do;—by these means he got in good case, and two coats; but what made his fortune, was a long bill he presented to the committee of
the

the sitting member ; and, as they were weak enough to dispute it, as the defendant was an unpopular man, and the bill a little obscure, the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff. This made his fortune, and the world gave his character ; after which he was in wonderful request : and had all the nobles in the land been Lord Gauntlets, he would have had every man of them.

In the case of Gauntlet versus Mushroom, Mr. Supple had many points to conceal ; talked with great volubility, but produced none of the documents demanded by Mr. Josiah Turgid, who had many points to find out, and did not talk at all.

It was an ill-fated morning which brought two unwelcome expresses to Delworth ; one for the beautiful Countess, the other for Sir Solomon Mushroom, in the person of Mr. Josiah Turgid himself, whose suspicion of foul play made him so watchful and jealous, that he had procured a copy of the deed of renunciation signed by the Earl and Countess, of those very estates, and that very title, for which his client was on the point of paying eighty thousand pounds ; and as the stated time for the Earl's descent from the peerage, was within fourteen days after the legitimacy of his nephew should be proved ; and as that was now done, Mr. Turgid had taken the most expeditious mode of informing Sir Solomon of the whole business.

Such of our readers as have visited that grand and useful appendage to the honour and crown of Great-Britain, the wild beasts in the Tower, and have heard the savage monarch of the woods in a rage for his supper, may conceive something like the Knight, at this discovery ; but nothing in that, or any other curious collection, can give an idea of the fury of the beautiful Countess, when he presumed to speak, in a loud key, to her on the business.

Lady Gauntlet had indeed received an express, ill calculated to sweeten her temper.

Admiral Herbert, notwithstanding the most strenuous endeavours, on the part of her friends, to avert the misfortune, had been at court, where he did not trouble any great man to present him : he had made his

bows

bows at sea, and his services were his patrons ; he boldly shewed himself where those services were of the greatest importance ; demanded an audience, and delivered a plain tale, with such feeling and truth, that the pension on the Irish establishment designed for the beautiful Countess, was reserved for some other, and it is hoped, worthier purpose. Notice was sent to the friends of her divine ladyship, that her presence would be dispensed with ; and a note from the minister forwarded with due delicacy, to request the Earl's resignation of his appointments.

In the midst of these vexations, it was very hard on Lady Gauntlet to have the torments of futurity anticipated, by letting loose one of her own black implements to torture and upbraid her ; it was too much, and the knight, ignorant of the infinitude of her griefs, thinking it was his reproaches that changed the face of an angel into foaming fury, was appalled.

"To think, Madam," said he, in a softer tone, "that you should so treacherously abandon *me*—me, who have been so faithful to your interest ;—who exposed my character ;—who—"

"Who wrote the villainous scroll of which this is a copy," cried she, shewing the rough draught of his offer to Montreville, which he had given to Charlotte, and which she had entrusted to her mother.

Sir Solomon gnashed his teeth ; drops of perspiration stood on his forehead.

While she traced his nefarious practices through life, from the beginning of his artful career to that moment, marking the officious intelligence he brought from London respecting the wife of the late Earl, and the letters he wrote to Montreville, as the two grand epochs of his life, with a volubility, precision, and malice that bore down every thing before it ; and when she retired, left poor Sir Solomon, with distended eyes, dropped jaw, and shaking limbs without power to move. In this condition he was found by Mrs. Feversham and Miss Mushroom.

"Why what, in the name of wonder," cried Mrs. Feversham, "is the matter with Sir Solomon ! sure Sir, you are unwell ?"

"Law !

"Law! Mrs. Feversham, you are always finding out one strange thing or another."

"Charlotte," said Sir Solomon, you must prepare to leave this house—you have narrowly escaped ruin, and had it not been for my friend Mr. Josiah Turgid—"

"Law, uncle! I am sure he is a very troublesome, dawdling, old fellow; he can have done no good."

"Charlotte, you must not marry this son of the Gauntlets."

"Not marry him! not marry Lord Delworth! what after making such a piece of work! after inviting all the world to the wedding! and making that beggarly Lord at the castle as jealous as a Moor! not marry!"

"No not marry! get your things ready, or leave the house with me without them."

"For my part," joined Mrs. Feversham, "though the house is pretty enough, nay, though it is very pretty, here are such in and out, hocus pocus doings, that I protest I shan't be sorry——"

"*You* shan't be sorry, ma'am. Well, that is too bad; pray who thinks of your sorrow? my uncle does not consult you."

"Well, don't vex yourself about me, you dear disagreeable thing, for I have a notion you will have affairs enough of more consequence."

"I say we will set off immediately."

"Set off, uncle! Law! I wish that Mr. Turgid had been hanged. I cannot set off, nor I can't be off; Lord Delworth and I have been as good as man and wife ever since I have been in the country."

"Hush—sh—sh—sh!" cried Mrs. Feversham.

"What does the scorpion say?" demanded Sir Solomon.

"No, ma'am, I shall not hush, nor need my uncle be in a passion; for Lord Delworth is a man of honour, and we are bound to each other."

"Will he marry you, madam, without my money?"

"Law, uncle! do you think I can ask him such an odd question?"

"Ay, Sir Solomon," said Mrs. Feversham, "that would be an odd question, indeed."

"However, Sir, (and Miss Mushroom at that moment

ment happening to recollect about five hundred cases in point, which in all her reading, she had never known to be given up, she assumed an air of dignity) my honour and my heart are in my own keeping; I have pledged the one, and yielded the other; so, Sir, though I should be extremely sorry to offend you, I *must* say I shall keep to my engagement."

"You will."

"Indubitably"

"Why then, by G— madam, you shall indubitably starve."

"Cruel uncle! unhappy Delworth! undone Charlotte!"—and the wretched fair put her handkerchief to her eyes, and hastening out at the door, was the next moment seen passing the window, hanging on the arm of her lover.

"Poor girl!" cried Mrs. Feverham! "You must not be surprised, Sir Solomon; you can't suppose her heart is to be drawn off and on as you tie or untie your money-bags; she is in love—but, heavens! Sir Solomon, what is the matter?"

Chronic diseases had begun to make great breaches in the equanimity of the knight's disposition, even before Mrs. Feverham left Mushroom-house. The alternate struggles of passion, grief, rage, and fear, were too much for him to contend with at once; it turned the current of his blood; he became black in the face, then broke out into profuse perspiration, and was carried, by direction of Mrs. Feverham, to bed, with an attack of the gout in his stomach, that promised fair to take him off.

News of this sort, whether good or bad, circulates with amazing rapidity. Lady Gauntlet would not condescend to enter his chamber; but she heard from two doctors, who were summoned, that it was doubtful whether he could live till morning.

Lord and Lady Gauntlet were just now almost bewildered with difficulties, inasmuch as when nobody disputed his *Lordship* and he possessed a fine clear estate, his creditors were numerous, and somewhat impatient. Now he was, or would be in a few days, reduced to plain Mr. Montreville, with no treasure but a beautiful

ful wife who had been in her bloom five and twenty years, and who had lost all her interest. The alternative of a prison or exile admitted of no doubt as to preference; and it struck her ladyship, that Sir Solomon's money, as to be sure he must die, would make them vastly comfortable: she therefore gave her son his lesson; and though the paroxysms of Sir Solomon's disorder were frequent and dreadful, Lord Delworth could not bear his dear Charlotte out of his sight one moment.

Lady Gauntlet had the better opportunity to arrange her grand affairs, as Mrs. Feverham, finding nobody else cared about the sick man by whose death her least loss would be her annuity, nailed herself to the bedside, and followed up the doctor's medicines and directions with such zeal, that by day-light the next morning, when he was expected to be a corpse, the fit had left him, and he was thanking Mrs. Feverham for the life, she had, he said, preserved.

Although Sir Solomon did not ask for Charlotte, yet now that he was better, and her annuity secured, Mrs. Feverham thought she would let the dear disagreeable thing know;—but lo! her room was empty, her clothes gone, and her woman, Mrs. Persian, lamenting that she, who was the best dresser of hair and layer-on of *rouge* of any English woman in London, should have demeaned herself so much as to wait on the niece of a simple knight, who had the assurance to elope without letting her into the secret.

Mrs. Persian, the butler said, need not take on so; there had been more elopements without the knowledge of as good servants as she; for in the first place, Mrs. Woudbe, an artful, old devil—

“*Old!* Mr. Butler;”—Mrs. Feverham by no means thought Mrs. Woudbe could be an *old* woman, though in every other respect, she was bad enough.

The butler nodded an affirmative. Mrs. Woudbe then, the young Mrs. Woudbe, if the lady would have it so, set off at seven last night, and Madam Rosette, with the young ladies, were to bear her company part of the way; but, poor girls, he dared to say, their faces would never be seen there again; and how the devil the Countess, Lord Delworth, the Major, and Mrs. Modely got off he could not think, as none of the servants heard them—but off they all were. “As to me,”
he

he added, " I have saved a pretty decent fortune, so indeed have most of the men, and we don't mind a year or two's wages, but it will fall hard on the women."

" What a simpleton am I ! " cried Mrs. Feverham, " to listen to all this prating, and I dare say not a word true—I will go to Lady Gauntlet directly." So said, so done; but facts were exactly as Mr. Butler had stated them.

This was the eve of the intended wedding-day, when cooks, confectioners, carpenters, fiddlers, taylor's, lampmen and all sorts of trades, were to make the joyful finish to their work; and they no sooner heard that there would be no wedding, nor any money, than they began to be very loud, and very blunt.

What could poor Mrs. Feverham do in this case? Sir Solomon still lay, tho' out of danger, in a state that rendered it impossible to disclose the situation of matters to him. The Rev. Mr. Brudenel, indeed, who came down, with a special licence in his pocket, to marry the young pair, continued in the house, for a reason that often makes close housekeepers—he had not money to pay the expence of the journey for his wife and self to London; and all he could say to appease the people was scoffed at.

In this exigence, Lady Louisa, who was terrified and indisposed, advised sending to request the protection of Lord Denningcourt and the Duke of Athelane, who both readily obeyed the signal of distress; and by some money from the latter, and fair promises from the former, prevailed on the people to disperse.

The wedding, the carnival, the balls *al fresco*, were of course, knocked up; and the Duke conveyed his two damsels to Athelane, from whence he proposed to write to Lady Denningcourt.

The aggregate of this history, told by the house-keeper, was truly a surprise to Lady Denningcourt and Rosa; the latter of whom, on going up to change her dress, was followed by Mrs. Brown.

" Oh geminigig, Miss Rosa," cried Betty, in a tone between a whine and a scold, " you see, Miss Rosy, my suffrens are never to ind; one trouble after another, oh dear! oh dear! what a misfortunate woman

I am;

I am ; to think of Miss Elinor, to come to go to serve me in this manner, as to run away with that scape-grace, Jack Croak ; for as to my liven again with any of the Croaks, or Madam Bawlsky, why 'tis quite out of character, out of the frying pan into the fire, and I shan't do no such thing. Oh dear, oh dear ! to think of my suffrens would milt a heart of stone.—And pray, Miss Rosa, can you think what is gone with that poor ignorant man, my husband ? to think as he no foonder hopp'd off with his one leg, then that silly Miss Elinor should ruin me in this cruel manner."

Rosa's mind had been so busied by the events which rapidly succeeded each other at Edinburgh, that after her first surprise, at finding he had not been with the Doctor, she had not thought of poor John.

" Poor Mr. Brown !" she exclaimed :—" Indeed Betty, I am quite uneasy about him. I expected to have both seen and heard of him at Edinburgh."

" At Edinburgh !—Lord, Miss Rosy, why what should he do there ? that would be only gwain further field to tread in the mire ; for thogh Skutlun is not such a devilditch place as I thought, there is a plentiful scarcity of poor hobjeks there I am sure ; they talk of the good politifies of the city, but 'tis all great cry and little wool ; for if there is not no thieves, there's baggars enough :—Not that I disparage baggars, Miss Rosa, fur from it ; I am sure if I did not clean you myself, I stood by and seed it done ; but howsever, wonders grows with acrons, and here be you a gwain to be made a fine Lady, and have all poor Miss Elinor's rooms, even to that bod little one as she liked so well, and I suppose I shall lose my place."

" If you had behaved well to Mr. Brown, perhaps you would not have wanted a place, Betty ; for he, I assure you, will be taken care of by Colonel Buhanun's children."

" What, I suppose Miss, they'll allow him a crown a week, and sixpence for backee ; but what's that ? why not enough hardly to pay for my milk of roses."

" Then use water as I do, Betty."

" Not I, Miss ; for, besides that your face is as white as the driven snow, 'tis not genteel ; but howsever,

ver,

ver, Miss Rosy, I suppose you must have a maid, as you are gwain to be a fine lady, and as that poor ignorant man, John Brown, said—let me see—something about prosperity breaking the bond of affliction;—and so I hope, Miss Rosy, as you'll speak to my lady, and let me stop;—though God he knows I live the life of a dog;—our stuart is as grumpish as an old hound; and though he is a portly man, and with a power of money, I think myself as good as he—why not;—and I am sure when John Brown had his two legs, and uft to have his hair plaster'd down his temples, and his cock'd hat, and cambric chitterlin, why he was no more to compare with him nor nothen;—but my suffrens will never ind, that's a sure mark."

Rosa had changed her dress, without the least assistance from Betty, during her unconnected harrangue, which she heard without hearing, her thoughts being full of anxious wonder respecting John;—"I am really uneasy about your husband, Betty,—I think if he is alive—"

"Lord, Miss Rosy, how soon you be dressed, and you look as nice as my nail;—alive, Miss; yes, yes, I dare say he is alive and merry; give John Brown a pot of fine amber, a clean chitterlin, spatterdashes, and that rigmirol old Shukspur, he never minded nothen about paying the brewer or distiller."

"And who did mind it, Betty?"

"Why Lord, Miss, nobody, to be sure! for I am sure I had no time.—But oh, geminigig! Miss, do look out of this here winder; what thing is that coming waddleing along with two sarvants after her? why I wish I may die if I don't believe it is my old Mistress Feversham; why, what can have brought her into these parts;—well, to be sure, she is in her element now; geminigig, look at her feathers, and her long train, and see, if she has not got a smart body carrying her paresoul—my stars! she moves like our goose after the goslings; well, I declare she looks monstrous credibility; I shall go and take notice on her, and ask her into the ouse-keeper's room, now our stuart is so grumpish;"—and away ran Betty, while Mrs. Feversham bestowed on our heroine a sufficient number of
 nods

nods and short bobbing courtesies, to intimate she was come to visit *her*.—So she descended time enough to apprise Lady Denningcourt, and witness the mortification of poor Betty, whose familiar address was answered with the most forbidding coldness, and whose invitation to the ouse-keeper's room, was not answered at all.

The lady was so over-dressed that, between the weight of a gold muslin, trimmed with Mechlin edging, spangled with gold, and an immense plume of fine ostrich feathers, with a large bunch of artificial roses, and a wreath of the same round her trimmed hat, with other appendages totally unsuitable to the undress her fine lace morning cap affected, she really looked ready to sink with fatigue; when conducted by a servant, she entered where Lady Denningcourt and Rosa were sitting.

Rosa arose to introduce her to the Countess, but Mrs. Feversham chusing to introduce herself, she made a sliding courtesy, hoped her la'ship was well; threw herself on a sofa; took off her glove; shewed a white arm decorated with pearl bracelets, and fingers, where, as Betty said, prosperity had broken the bond of affliction, for they were decked with real diamonds, instead of doveys. This fair hand she extended to Rosa, with "how do, my dear—hoom—I am vastly glad to see you, as you may suppose from my taking this long walk, which has almost killed me—hoom!—to be sure I might have rode, but then exercise is so good for me, I am always better after profuse perspiration—hoom!"

Rosa blushed for her fine acquaintance.

"Well, I suppose you have heard how we go on?"

"No;"—Rosa had only heard the marriage was broken off.

"No! what you don't know then they are all off but poor Sol, and me, and the little priggish parson, and his insipid wife."

"Off!" repeated Lady Denningcourt.

"Exactly so," replied Mrs. Feversham, shrugging her shoulders;—"and that nasty woman, Mrs. Woudbe,
the

she is finely done up too; you must have heard of her."

Rosa made an effort to speak, but the eagerness of the intended question prevented her utterance; and Lady Denningcourt, who though ignorant of the motives, saw her impatience, answered for her,—that they were just returned from Edinburgh, and that having missed the Duke of Athelane, who went a different road, they were entirely ignorant of the cause that had prevented the splendid preparations of their neighbour being carried into effect.

The lady begged her la'ship's pardon;—in her very delicate situation, her mind could not be quite collected, and poor Sir Sol continued so ill too:—but the short and the long of the affair was just this,—hoom:—"The Gauntlets were guilty of bad acts, very bad, in which they implicated poor Sir Sol; he might be guilty, or he might not—that was not the question at present;—but they had certainly tried to cheat him out of eighty thousand pounds; being detected just at the moment, the poor despicable Earl rode post to Whitehaven, as they had since discovered, hired a collier to carry them to the continent, and sent for his family, who persuaded the dear disagreeable Miss Mushroom to leave poor Sir Sol in a dying state;—and so they are all off."

"Good God!" exclaimed Rosa, with real concern, "and the young ladies! are they too gone in this collier?"

"O dear, no! that nasty woman, Mrs. Woudbe, who, though quite done up, is gone to patch up a story to her husband, took them with her."

"Is she really returned to her husband?"

"To be sure, my dear, where would you have her go? after the Irish fellow that cheated her of her jewels?"

"Irish fellow!" Rosa remembered, bad as Montreville was, he was the son of Magdalena.

"Ay, fellow!—my dear, how you colour; why you are not going to defend a common swindler—a cheat; why my dear, if he be caught and prosecuted—
he

he must be hanged, however it might affect Mrs. Woudbe's fine feelings."

"I hope not,"—and Rosa turned pale, "for his mother's sake;—what has he done? yet, what I already know is bad enough."

"Do you know his mother, Rosa?" asked Lady Denningcourt.

Rosa wept.

"A mother!" exclaimed the visitor, "I never heard of her;—his father was, I find, originally an Irish attorney."

"Of whom are you speaking, madam?"

"Why of Whittal! to be sure,—an Irish relation of the mock Countess, whose father having left him all the secrets of the family, and, I am afraid, a few of my poor Sir Sol's, he had the impudence and cleverness, for to do him justice he must have been clever, to pass himself on that nasty woman Mrs. Woudbe, aye, and half an hundred city tradesmen too, (so you know that put his cleverness past all doubt) for a charming young man, for whom I have always had a passion—I mean young Littleton, whom Sir Sol sent to India with your patron, and who is now the declared Earl of Gauntlet."

"And how did you hear all this?" cried Rosa, her bosom panting, her cheeks glowing, and tears trembling in her eyes.

"How did I hear it! why I heard it from every body; and what every body says must be true—*vox populi* is *vox Dei*;—but indeed I read his whole last words and confession before he sailed for the colonies, in that letter you yourself gave into my hands, wherein he advised the nasty woman to be true to her dirty little husband, and gave her directions where to get her diamonds, which, as he could not sell, he had only pawned."

Rosa was all agitation; she untied her black collar, rose up, sat down, sobbed, half-laughed, looked round for some friendly participator in the agonizing triumph of her soul, met the soft enquiring eye of Lady Denningcourt, flew into her arms and shed a torrent of tears in her bosom.

"My

"My dear soul," cried the lady, whose name the reader will think rather doubtful, "this is too kind; you are over-joyed at my good fortune, and you have reason, though I shall chiefly live at Mushroom-place;—yet, your La'ship knows, there are certain things one must do,—such as being presented at Court, and seen there a drawing room day or two after,—and as I shall want a sort of smart useful companion, why I mean to take you, my dear."

"What, madam!" answered Lady Denningcourt, wiping the tear of sympathy from her eye; "*You* take Miss Walsingham to be *your* useful companion?"

"Oh! I dare say your La'ship is surprised; but as to the dear disagreeable Mushrooms, I suppose your La'ship knows there will be *two* of them; for Lord Lowder will bring an action, except Sir Sol comes down a second fortune, which I shan't advise him to do; I am vastly fond of them—at a distance—your La'ship comprehends me."

"You do my penetration too much honour, madam; but Miss Walsingham is totally unfit for the situation you propose."

"Your La'ship really thinks so;—Well, I am sure I am vastly obliged to you;—but my good wishes are the same. I believe she has rather a more haughty mind, than exactly suits her origin; but I am very fond of her, for all that."

"*At a distance*, madam, perhaps."

"Oh! no, my lady, upon honour I was quite serious."

"My dear Mrs. Feversham!" cried Rosa, with a smile that displayed a thousand graces, "I know you are, and my obligation to you—"

"Lady Mushroom, at your orders—bless me," looking at a watch, set round with brilliants, "I wonder my carriage is not come; poor Sir Sol will really fret himself ill; he does not know where I am gone; but he will get used to that.—You look surprised, and as we are in a most beautiful, romantic situation, I declare I will have Mushroom-place taken entirely down, and rebuild it like this;—but more like the heroine of a romance than a novel, I will tell you my story in six words."

Lady Mushroom's carriage was announced.

"I am

“ I am ready—well, then, my dear, you know I told you poor Sir Sol was extremely ill ; and really, as I should have lost my pitiful annuity and the poor man was left by every body, I took all possible care of him, not at all conscious, that every pill, and every draught I gave him, was impregnated with love, for you know that was the last thing one could have expected from a man with the gout in his stomach ; he made the proposal, and I (here Lady Mushroom thought proper to put her spangled fan before her face) acceded.—The little priggish parson, and his poor pining quality spouse, were ashamed to be seen ; he had a special licence in his pocket, not filled up with the names of the bride and bridegroom ; I got old Turgid to mention the matter ; the parson demurred, but Turgid had been so abused by the Gauntlets and the dear disagreeable Mushroom, and the parson was in such distress for money, that we carried our point. Poor Sir Sol was supported on pillows, and I dare say was ready to expire with rapture, though he talked of revenge ; however, whatever he felt, as he said he should die in peace, and as I knew I must live in splendour, why I make myself happy. Adieu, Miss ; your La’ship’s most obedient—my carriage—!”

“ What a woman !” exclaimed Lady Denningcourt.

“ Oh my dearest madam,” cried Rosa, bursting into fresh tears, while joy beamed from every feature, “ What a man !”

“ Who, my love ?”

“ This friend of my first benefactor ; this son of the long suffering Magdalena ; this—oh forgive and pity me, this idol of the poor Beggar’s heart.”

The explanations which followed the tender confessions, were such as increased the interest of the Countess in her protégée ; but no step could be delicately taken, to prove her recantation of error, either to the young man, or his mother.

Rosa shewed her patroness the note Magdalena had sent her ; and it was known that Delworth was now the property of the right owner ; the servants were not, indeed, yet displaced ; but as the Grange steward was already arrived, and taking account of every thing,
and

and as Rosa had given her address to Magdalena, Lady Denningcourt thought the matter must rest, as far as related to her, in its present state; "It will not, however, be amiss," she continued, "to keep up an intercourse with Mrs. Feversham; and oh," she cried, "how incredible should I have thought it, that I ever could love a Countess of Denningcourt, as I do, and shall love you."

"The afternoon (oh what an afternoon was this to Rosa!) was passed by the Countess in her boudoir, writing letters to the Duke, and to her daughter, and Doctor Croak, inclosed in one to her agent in London, and one also, which she did not mention to Rosa, reminding Magdalena of their meeting at Florence, and inviting her and her family to Denningcourt; and afterwards they rambled to the village, and visited those beneyolent foundations, which had filled Rosa's heart with veneration for the Countess's character, before she knew her person.

"Oh!" cried Rosa, sighing, as she watched the receding rays of the setting sun empurpling the turrets of Denningcourt castle, "Oh that the wretched inmate of that venerable building——."

"Do you mean Lord Denningcourt's mistress?—she is gone, she has left him; and though he did not appear to care about her when she was with him, my house-keeper tells me he set off to Scotland after her, like a distracted man, this morning; 'tis a strange story she tells me; he pretends to be jealous of Duke Athelane; and indeed she says M'Lane certainly did often go to the castle; but I know my uncle.—"

"Dear Lady Denningcourt, and so do I; what a succession of joyful surprises succeed my transient sorrows; so transient, I have almost forgot them. The Duke has, I doubt not, taken her away. Oh she was such a beautiful girl! and her father so loved her; and though he did not shew it so much, admired her too."

Lady Denningcourt wished she had known this, before her letter to the Duke was sent off, but would write the next post; "something," said she, "it

strikes me, I may do, for a family to whose most valuable branch I have been so disastrous."

"Oh gemminigig," cried Betty, when Rosa was going to bed, "Miss Rosy, was you ever so dumb-founded in your life, as at sight of Madam Fever-sham made Lady Mushroom? our stuart has been up to Delworth this evening, glist out of a bit of kurofity, and there they say she do top it most finely; and Sir Solomon, an ould rogue; I am sure, if it had not have been for he, I mought have had a ouse of my own to this day; but God a-mighty pays debts athout money; howsever, he can't stand hand nor foot; and after all the doctor thinks as it's a moat pint whether he lives or dies. Lord a massey only think, if he shoud die out right, and she have all his money; gemmini-gig, how my head do turn round with other people's luck; God he knows I was born under a three-penny planet, never to be wuth a groat; for what do you think my lady said?—why she said, ses she, if Elinor chuses to have you Brown, I expect you will be appy to attend her; and I am sure I shant be appy at no such thing; if not, if Miss Walsingham chuses to keep you, you will, I ope, be sensible of the honour;—Lord, Miss Rosy, I could arldy help lasen in her face; howsever, if I do go among them Croaks again, they'll find me a crabbed stick, I can tell them that."

"Very well," replied Rosa, smiling.

"Why, Lord, Miss! what is come to you? why the turn of a straw t'other day set you a-crying, and now a straw without turning sets you a-lasen; but they may las that wins—my sufferens are without ind, I knew that.—But pray, Miss, how do you like that tall ould Scotswoman, as my lady is so fond on?"

"Mrs. Meggy M'Laurin;—oh, she is a charming, good creature!"

"Well, Miss, I don't think much amiss on her—only she is a little kurous; she asked me so many questions about you, that I was so hampered, as I always ham, when I got any thing to keep secret, that I told her all your whole story in the park just now, and Lord, she cried as if one had stuck her with a knife; and when I told her what a piece of work I
had

had to get you clean, and how poor John Brown—well, he was a good-natured soul, give the devil is due—would not let us rub that nasty mark off your side with a round towel, well, to be sure, I tho't as she would a founded at that, and, poor soul, she ses she'd give the world to see it; but, as I say, that's all nonsense.—Good night, Miss Rosy."

The next morning Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin entered the room, with Mrs. Brown, before Rosa was up.

"Trothe, Mefs," said the good woman, "ai cannae tele hoo daft ai am; but gin ye wull, just lete me luke et the merke the gude weef speer'd just by your herte, ye sal note ken hoo mickle ye sal farve me? I hanna claied mine een aw neight about it."

Rosa smiled and blushed; she was a stranger to the naked freedoms some modest ladies do not withhold from the world, much less each other. The Tyrian marble was not more smooth than her polished neck, nor that of the Grecian Venus more finely formed. It was impossible, in a liberal age, where samples are allowed to the sight of the amorous chapmen of those charms which marriage only can authorise them to touch, that she could be unconscious of her own superior beauty; but so truly did modesty blend her soft influence with that consciousness, that while a white dress was thrown over her neck, it was with reluctance she permitted Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin to examine, with her spectacles, the blue mark which had heretofore so puzzled Colonel Buhanun's kitchen committee.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin's examination lasted a most unreasonable length of time; her spectacles several times became misty; they were taken off, wiped, and often replaced, before Rosa felt a succession of warm drops fall from the inspector's eyes on the little mark under her heart.

"What is the matter, my good Mrs. M'Laurin? do I bear the same mark with any one dear to you? have you ever lost a child or grand-child with such a mark?"

"The Lorde's wull be done!" cried Mrs. Moggy, casting up her eyes and hands.

"Amen!" cried Rosa.

"Amen! pray God!" echoed Betty—"for what can't be cured must be endured."

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin sat on an arm-chair by the bed-side, with her eyes fixed on Rosa through her spectacles, save only when they were taken off to be wiped; observing a profound silence till she went to her dressing-room, whither she also followed, and where she remained, without speaking, till Rosa was ready to leave it, when she complained of a most violent head-ache, and went to bed.

Lady Denningcourt wrote this day again to the Duke of Athelane, and also returned Lady Mushroom's visit without Rosa.

Lady Mushroom's brain was a perfect eddy before this honour, of which she did not fail to make the most; and though the Countess behaved with remarkable affability to Lady Louisa Brudenel, Lady Mushroom was so very good as to expatiate, in a whisper, on the advantage of character. "You see" she added, "how it is—poor Sir Solomon and myself are only a sort of interlopers, yet *I* am visited."

Lady Louisa, dejected and spirit-broken, urged Mr. Brudenel to return to London, when Sir Solomon gave him a fifty pound note, and his lady a fine diamond ring as a *douceur* for performing the ceremony; but poor Mr. Brudenel, who having reckoned on sharing some part of the eighty thousand pounds, had promised to discharge certain pecuniary obligations, was really afraid to return. Lady Denningcourt saw the spiritless despondence of the wife, and the settled gloom of the husband. Lady Mushroom had given a key to both: and the Countess could not help feeling the miserable indelicacy of the unhappy pair waiting to be turned out of what Lady Louisa was born to consider as her father's mansion; she with difficulty repressed the tear of sensibility, while Lady Mushroom was blessing herself, that as poor Sir Solomon could not be moved, but at cost of his life, the young Lord must know she could have no hand in poor Sir Solomon's wickedness.

Mr. Brudenel and Lady Louisa at length, lacerated with internal anguish, left the apartment.

"Poor

“ Poor things ! ” exclaimed Lady Mushroom, “ I don’t know what will become of them.”

Lady Denningcourt, who but to hear if any thing interesting to Rosa transpired, would have thought as little of visiting her new ladyship as the former mistress of the mansion, took her leave ; and Lady Mushroom was in too great a hurry to announce the honour done her by her visitor to poor Sir Solomon, to notice that the Countess’s carriage proceeded empty, and that she walked from the house with the Brudenels. Mr. Brudenel’s was not only a gentleman’s, but a sacred profession ; and Lady Denningcourt considered the cause of religion as suffering, when its ministers were reduced to be objects of derision or contempt. Mr. Brudenel was no longer so ; he handed her to her carriage, while Lady Louisa supported herself, overcome with emotion, against a tree. The Countess drove off, and the altered pair returned to the house, put their things together with alacrity, and began their journey to London, without fear of molestation when they arrived there.

C H A P X V I.

A short Chapter, containing the Rejection of a lover, the complaints of a wife, and the Tables turned on Mrs. Brown.

THE first person Lady Denningcourt saw, after her return from Delworth, was Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin with a handkerchief bound round her head ; her ruddy cheeks tinged with a light purple, and her eyes sore with weeping.

“ My dear M’Laurin, are you ill,” cried the Countess, “ what shall I do for you ? ”

“Trothe ai’ll tele ye, my lady, ye mun send me to the sooth, ai’ll be shoore to coom bauck en a wee bet.”

“To the south; why what would you do there?”

“Tes nae metter, ai mun gang.”

“But confider, dear Moggy, though you are hearty among your friends, you are too old to take a long journey alone.”

“Ai caunna be too eild, tull farve Gode an my frinds.”

“But what bufiness?”

“Tes a coonsel I caunna deefclose.”

“This is the strangest whim; if you are weary of staying with me, go home.”

“Ah my lady, you dinna ken; I caunna reste neet nor day, fae mun gang sooth an ai weer tull dee.”

“Think of it to-morrow.”

To-morrow came, Mrs. Moggy bound a second handkerchief round her head; a darker purple tinged her cheek; her eyes were more swollen, and her whim, like most old women’s whims, strengthened by opposition; to the south she would go; and at length, accompanied by the house steward, to the south she went, promising “to be shoore tull coom bauck en a wee bet.”

The attachment of Lady Denningcourt to her young and now only companion, acquired every hour a more endearing character:—besides the resemblance so dear to memory, there was a modest rectitude of mind, a suavity of manners, a grace of speech, and an unremitting desire to please in Rosa, that could not fail of improving the partiality of such a mind as that of her present protectress.

Rosa, on her part, found the maternal solicitude she had experienced from Mrs. Harley, and which she valued as the dearest of blessings, even increased, in Lady Denningcourt; and it excited that only return of affectionate gratitude, which *owing* owes *not*; and thus so happily disposed towards each other, in the full enjoyment of splendid affluence, and possessing that sense of the blessings of providence, “which leaving nothing to ask, could only be incessantly thanked,”

Lady

Lady Denningcourt and her protégée must have been completely happy, but——

“ Oh that eternal *but* ; that cruel, never-conquered last head of the hydra of human infirmity !—*but* the good, the amiable Lady Denningcourt, had found in the dear and un hoped maternal tie, which she considered as a blessing of the first magnitude, a source of uneasiness which called for all her fortitude to combat, without a hope of subduing ; and there were many, very many moments, when Rosa’s heart detached itself from every present blessing, and when fancy would wander to the residence of the beloved Magdalena, and figure the mortification of her son, at the determined coldness which had so visibly distressed his mother ; and when bewildered in uncertainty, now elated with bashful hope, now depressed by fear, she gave herself up to that soft melancholy, “ which is ever the forerunner of pleasure.”

An enormous and interesting packet, which arrived from Duke Athelane, occupied them a whole day in reading and answering.

The Duke regretted that conduct in Elinor, which a close observation on her lucid intervals, had, in some degree, prepared him to expect ; and approved of the plan of conduct the Countess had adopted towards her :

“ Not all the blood of all the Howards,”

could, he was now convinced, ennoble the soul ; and the comparative merits of the two young friends at the Jointure-house, had been to him a lesson of humility in respect to blood, he believed he should be the better for, as long as he had power to make any distinctions at all ;—he pleaded guilty in respect to the depriving Lord Denningcourt of his mistress—that Lord, who, like Pococurante, was one of those prodigious geniuses, whom nothing in his possession could please, was now in the neighbourhood of Athelane, with Lord Aaron Horsenagog his first introducer to the Buhanuns, threatening destruction to himself and all mankind, if he could not recover a jewel, whose lustre possession obscured :—but the Duke continued, “ if ever he receives her again, it must be as a bride

from my hands."—The remaining part of the packet more particularly concerned our heroine.

Mr. Angus, immediately on his coming from Caithness to Athelane, to pay his respects to the Duke, declared his passion for Rosa, and solicited permission to make her honourable proposals.

The Duke was astonished ; he had never understood Rosa was known to, much less beloved by, his nephew :—he expressed himself with some asperity on the occasion, both in regard to Mr. Angus, and the fair object of his admiration ; to exonerate her, a letter from Doctor Cameron was produced, acquainting Mr. Angus, not only with the situation, but sentiments of Rosa : and as the Duke readily adopted his nephew's sanguine opinion, that her rejection of his passion proceeded from a delicate respect to his family, it restored her to his esteem, but left him exceedingly embarrassed in regard to his nephew.

Indeed, had Rosa been in any other protection than his own family, it is probable the young gentleman would have made his first proposals to herself ; but the propriety and delicacy of her sentiments, which the doctor insisted were even improved, though, when she had first left Edinburgh he thought that impossible, ascertained that the most honourable mode would also be the most politic ; accordingly he openly avowed his attachment, and his passion had the more formidable an appearance, as it had been nourished with undeviating constancy, when hope was almost extinct.

Miss Angus, after the first surprise, frankly approved his choice ; while Miss Bruce, who had already taken care to inform him, that his uncle had destined him for a mad wife, heard with dismay and astonishment, not only that the enchanting Walsingham was adored by him she chose to adore herself, but that she was, in fact, the identical little Beggar, of whom every body had heard so much, and knew so little.

The poor disappointed lady took fits on the occasion, of two sorts ; first she shriek'd, kick'd, scratch'd and bit herself, and every body else ; then she talked her hearers into the vapours, about the terrible disgrace an alliance so degrading, must entail on the house of Athelane ;

Athelane ; whispering even to the servants, that the honourable Mrs. Angus was going to make a beggarly and spurious descendant of the Buhanun's, future Duchess of Athelane.

This secret was of a complexion to irritate every collateral branch of the family, and remonstrances were made in form to the Duke, by the friends of all the young unmarried ladies of the whole clan, against so unheard of a disgrace.

Had the whole female creation been submitted to his Grace, to select a bride for his heir, the solemn approbation of his own heart would have rested on Rosa ; but the *who*, and *what*, of so much and grand importance among the old Scotch nobility, were considerations of such terrific magnitude, as at least made him hesitate ; and after for ever discarding the incendiary, Miss Bruce, he extorted a promise from his nephew, to allow him a month for consideration, before he took any step in the business, and then wrote a statement of particulars to Lady Denningcourt, requesting her serious opinion of a business of so much consequence to the family.

" Ah ! " said Lady Denningcourt, after reading the Duke's long letter to Rosa, " this is a sort of toil my uncle spreads for *me* ; he wishes, I see, to justify his excessive partiality for you, by my example, and I should certainly fall into it ; but you, Rosa, are not, I fear, disposed to prove the triumph of humble virtue and extraordinary beauty, over noble blood and clanish tenacity.—I must, however, answer the letter ;—what shall I say for you ? "

" Say, my dear Countess, " replied Rosa, " all that respectful gratitude—— "

" But what in respect to the finest young man in Scotland ? what of your heart ? "

" Oh, madam ! " and Rosa deeply blushed.

" Ah's and oh's are awkward interjections in certain cases, my sweet Rosa ; again I ask, what says your heart to Mr. Angus, with a fine fortune in possession, and the ducal honours and estate in reversion ? "

" I am worthy of neither. " •

“ You are not allowed to judge of that ;—it is your heart I would speak to.”

“ Well then, my heart—is a lost one.”

“ And you do not wish to recal it ?”

“ Oh no.—”

“ Oh ! again. Well, retire to your boudoir, as I will to mine ; write the Duke on common subjects, such as Magdalena’s history, which you tell so prettily—that will make him sad ; then give him our bride Lady Mushroom’s—that, if any thing can, will make him smile. Rosa, you do not perceive, what is very clear to me, that, after all this solemn statement, the Duke’s heart is set on seeing you the wife of Angus : that heart of his, Rosa, is a noble one, and is, in all its regards to God and man, exactly what a chieftain of the first Caledonian family should be ;—but go to your boudoir——I am to be explicit ?”

“ Perfectly.”

“ And your heart is certainly a lost one ?”

Rosa blushed an affirmative.

“ And you have no ambition ?—you will only be a Countess ?—Go, go, Lady Gauntlet—the lady Lady Gauntlet that *was*, could have taught you better.”

The answers dispatched to Athelane, the fair Dowager at the Jointure-house, and her protégée, might have been in the state of angels ; *but*—again, and for ever, there must be a but against perfect happiness :

“ Man never is, but always to be blest.”

No letter had yet arrived from Magdalena, nor from Elinor ; and constant expectation of the past, with the successive disappointments, would have broke in a little on the pleasure, not less grateful to Rosa than her protectress, of repeating over and over, every anecdote she could remember or Betty remind her, of Colonel Buhanon, which, though a tale told so many times, was never tedious ;—as to the reading the letters she had received from him, and bathing every character with tears, that was a luxury Lady Denningcourt was even avaricious of, and she had taken them into her own possession for that purpose.

Lady

Lady Mushroom was in the habit of paying them flying visits, when any thing new occurred at Denningcourt. Miss Mushroom had wrote a penitential letter to poor Sir Sol, which he refused to open ; the house-keeper and butler at Delworth had received notice to quit ; but as all the rest of the servants yet remained, and no particular notice had been taken about poor Sir Sol, who was again in a dangerous state, she had no thought of removing ; till one morning she was announced, just as Rosa was sitting down to her harp, and before Lady Denningcourt had left her chamber.

“ My dear creature,” she cried, “ do you know that I am the most miserable creature in the world ? not excepting poor Sir Sol. I should have sent my P. P. C. but have fifty thousand things to say. Half a dozen people came to Delworth last night : a little ugly dark woman among them, who, in a language which I had difficulty to comprehend, abused poor Sir Sol, and actually threatened to have him thrown upon a dunghill. Now, though I dare say he deserves it, as between ourselves, he is a sad wicked old man, one must not, for one’s own credit, suffer him to be ill used ; so I sent his valet and Mrs. Persian, whom as she dresses hair and puts on *rouge* so vastly well I have made my own woman, about to find accommodation, at any price, suitable to our rank ; but, if you will believe me, my dear, the brutes at all the inns within ten miles round refused to take us in ;—so, as the man, who came with the little ugly foreigner said, he was sure his lady would not be the death of her greatest enemy, and as I have always had a passion for that fine interesting creature, the rightful Lord Gauntlet, who knows I was no party in poor Sir Sol’s iniquity, and as it is really a pleasant thing to see right take place, I should have made myself easy ;—but poor Sir Sol is really as obstinate as wicked, and had rather *almost* die—not quite—he would be sorry to do that, I believe—than face either mother or son of these Gauntlets ;—so, my dear, I am vastly sorry to leave you, indeed I am also half sorry I married this old wicked Sir Sol ;—in London, nobody minds any thing of the kind ;

if people have money and live in style, they may be as wicked as they please, without inconvenience; but here in the country, when one hears all sorts of people ready to worship Lady Denningcourt in the same breath that they curse Lady Gauntlet and my poor wicked Sir Sol, one really gets out of conceit with bad people; and then, if I were not Lady Mushroom, I dare say your Countess would have invited me to stay the summer with you, instead of begging to be taken in at paltry inns."

Lady Mushroom actually wept at the conclusion of this speech; and Rosa, who was by this time pretty well acquainted with her good and bad qualities, tried to console her, by reverting to the many advantages of her situation.

"All stuff! my dear," interrupted Lady Mushroom;—"to be sure, I have been cutting down and letting out heaps of fine dresses, made for that tall May-pole, the dear, disagreeable Mushroom; but as I was unfolding the prettiest silver muslin I ever beheld—here it is—(throwing a parcel on the sofa)—I found a paper, on which was wrote 'A gala dress for my sweet child, my Rosa;' so that evidently belongs to you;—and now I shall be afraid to put on an article, lest it should be the right of some wrong'd widow or orphan, and so include me in the curses on the injustice of poor Sir Sol. Well, my dear, God bless you! I should have been vastly glad to have you with me, if you had been fit for my place, which the Countess assured me you was not. I am sure I wish I was in yours with all my heart and soul;—but adieu! I must go and take care of poor wicked Sir Sol.—we cannot be taken in nearer than sixteen miles."

Rosa attended her to her carriage, and assured her of the Countess's good wishes, as well as her own; lamented she could not solicit an invitation for her to the Jointure-house, as wife to so bad a man; but if ever——"

"Oh, my dear!" cried Lady Mushroom, bursting into tears, "you can't think what a good man my Mr. Fevertham was—every body was civil to me on his account. Oh, Lord! I wish I was a widow again."

The

The carriage drove off with this most common wish; and Rosa finding the Countess was in her boudoir, went thither to acquaint her with the motive of Mrs. Feversham's early visit.

She found her with a letter in her hand, on which her tears dropped in rapid succession; and this ceased to surprise Rosa, when she saw it came from Elinor. The Countess gave it her to read, and shed a fresh flood of tears.

The letter was a mixture of regret and self-acquittal for the step she had taken, which she attributed to the being deceived in respect to young Croak's situation, after she was separated from him by the Duke; for, instead of being well and happy, as even Rosa assured her, he was in prison, breaking his heart.

She was very sorry to have vexed Lady Denningcourt, but it was the only way to make her easy in the end, for she never could have been at home among people of quality; and really believed, if Jack had not taken her away, she should have been as bad as ever among the lords and ladies at Lady Hopely's, whose names she never could remember; as to the Duke, she never looked at him without trembling; and as to Doctor Croak, she should never be able to abide him, for his cruelty to Jack; though, as he was growing old and poor, they intended to allow him a maintenance.

They were now with their uncle, the farmer doctor; where, as it was harvest time, they were all very busy; and as he had been so good to her dear Jack, she hoped her dear ladyship, whom she could not dare to call mother, would not be angry, if, out of the much too liberal allowance she proposed, they bought the farm he rented, and gave it to him; and indeed, as Jack hated idleness, she believed he would go partners with his uncle.

She sent her love to dear Rosa, whom she should always love better than any body in the world, except Jack, and whom, if she had not been deceived by her, Elinor would never have left, but who was, notwithstanding, much fitter to live with a Countess than herself.

As

As to Betty Brown, she had learned to be so fine a lady, she would be quite troublesome in a farm house, where there was no milk of roses; so as Jack had got a handy girl to wait on her, she hoped Rosa would keep poor Betty. She concluded with thanks and obedience, &c.

“You see,” said the amiable Countess, “not only my peace, but my child’s happiness, depends on my leaving her in that rank where my angry father placed her. Nothing, as the Duke writes, can ennoble a plebeian soul; but my child is the only instance I ever knew of real good principles and integrity of heart, on which confidence and indulgence could make no impression; and I am equally surprised that, at the same school, with the same advantages, she is in every respect so much your inferior.”

“But, madam,” cried Rosa, “I had no home to forget with more celerity than I learned—no fond friend to indulge, to flatter—”

“To ruin you—happy girl! But the natural bias of your heart must have been the delicate refinements of virtue and honour; from them sprung the avidity after instruction and that emulation of excelling, which could alone make you what you are;—but my poor girl must buy the farm for this uncle, and then I think I must leave her to get in her harvest. Ah, Rosa! pity a mother of my rank, whose only child must move among the vulgar.”

Rosa could offer no alleviation of so certain and irremediable an evil; she could only endeavour to amuse the mind on which it was inflicted, and immediately repeated what had passed at Lady Mushroom’s visit.

“Poor woman!” said Lady Denningcourt—“she will find her lettings-out and cuttings down no relief against the misery of living with her poor Sir Sol;—but there are servants arrived at Delworth, and yet, I do not understand it—”

Lady Denningcourt’s wonder alluded to the letter she had written to Magdalena, which yet remained unanswered; but as that was a circumstance of which Rosa was ignorant, *she* thought only of the important
approaching

approaching era, which she wished, yet dreaded to arrive.

It was still the Countess's custom to make her promenade round her poor at Denningcourt; the evening was remarkably fine, and as old Dido was always the feeble attendant of Rosa, as well as now a great favourite of the Countess, Betty generally followed the ladies, in order, as Dido knew her better than the footmen, that she might be taken more care of.

They made all the usual charitable visits, and were going to cross the road from the village to the park, when a post chaise and four, with the horses and drivers all decorated with blue ribbands, passed, and after turning a little way up the avenue leading to the Jointure-house, stopped.

Lady Denningcourt could neither account for the appearance, nor guess at the business that should carry so strange an equipage to the Jointure-house; and the person who alighted from it and now approached, threw not any light on the subject.

It was John Brown: but so unlike the John Brown who left the Jointure-house, a few weeks since, that even Rosa did not at first know him.

He had on a new suit of cloaths, of the colour of his old master's livery, but made plain without cuffs, collar or livery lace; his hair was cut *à la militaire*, and plastered to his temples with pomatum and powder; his three cocked military hat with gold lace and stiff cockade, was put on one side his head; his cambrick plaited chitterlin stood out some inches from his bosom, and he wore a snow white spatterdash on each leg, which however did not conceal the heavy silver buckles on a pair of well japanned shoes; he flourished an handsome cane, and saluting the Countess with an open palm against his hat, after twirling one of his legs, and flourishing his stick, as he glanced at Betty, in advancing, took off his hat and offered a letter to Rosa.

"Oh my gracious goodness!" cried Betty, "if here ben't John Brown again, with good cloaths on his back, and two legs; well, if I did not say it was an imp in his likeness that comed in a shabby coat and one leg."

"Go

"Go thy way, woman," quoth John, with a most immoderate flourish of cane and arms,

"That man in the world who shall report he has

"A better wife, let him in nought be trusted

"For speaking false in that——"

Thou art above the desert of poor John Brown."

The only probable guess Rosa could hit on was, that John, having discovered the Colonel's fortune for his heirs, had brought a letter to her from Doctor Cameron, which his honest pride, wounded as it had been by his wife, induced him to deliver in this pompous manner. Smiling at his simple resentment, she received the letter without taking her eyes from the honest bearer, but it had attracted the regard of one whose eyes had no other employment at that moment.

"My master, madam," said John, raising himself into a perpendicular elevated posture, and pulling out his chitterlin; "*My master, my Colonel that was, madam, General Buhannun, that by the honour and glory of the King now is, madam, Oh! Miss Rosa, Miss Rosa,*" bursting into tears, "my master, my blessed master is alive! and will be with you to-morrow."

The astonishment—the joy—the almost incredulous joy of Rosa, was absorbed in concern for the Countess, who sunk motionless and senseless on the ground.—While Betty, on whose ears the welcome sound still rung, cried out, making a motion toward friendly greeting, which John disdainfully repelled,—“Oh gracious me! is he indeed; well, well, when things be at the worst they must mend. Oh dear, oh dear! who'd have thought my sufferens was so near an end? and if I did not tell our ouse-keeper as I dreamed of Pharaoh's fat kind and lean kind.”

The villagers were now thronging round their loved benefactress; the white hairs of the aged shook, the tears of the middle-aged fell, and the children crept together in dismal groups, when they saw the deathly pale countenance and lifeless form of their common mother carried into the nearest cottage.—

The

The doctor of the village, an honest, skilful, but before his misfortunes were known to the Countess, distressed man, was called; he approached her trembling—he saw the soul of benevolence was in danger of for ever quitting its mild abode; worlds would he have given, that a more skilful and less interested person was near:—It was necessary to bleed her instantly; while this operation was performing, another carriage was heard rattling through the village towards the Jointure-house;—the crowd attracted curiosity; on being asked why they were collected with such mournful and anxious looks round the cottage,—“It is our benefactress,—it is her who visits the sick,—who clothes the poor,—who is the mother of deserted infants,—it is the good Countess of Denningcourt, who was carried into the cottage dying,” they replied.—

“Merciful God!” cried a female voice;—the carriage door was opened; the crowd made way, and Rosa, who supported her beloved patroness, turning her streaming eyes from the flow-dropping blood, which, after cutting both arms and feet, followed the lancet into the warm water in which the latter were immersed, saw Magdalena.

“Oh madam!” exclaimed Rosa, “behold your preserver and my benefactress; she dies, we lose her for ever, at the moment when her sorrows only should expire.”

Magdalena’s fine majestic form inspired respect; that respect increased, when on the information of her servants it was known that she was the injured mother of the young Earl who was expected at Delworth, and whom report announced so different from the usurper; she perceived the drops which fell faster from the operator’s eyes than blood from the orifices, and her own tears washed the lifeless hand she press’d to her lips.

Such had been the consternation, nobody thought of sending to the Jointure-house for a carriage. The only rational being in the group was Mrs. Brown, who amid the wreck of matter and crush of worlds, would have only thought on self, dear, dear self; what she was saying to John, and his answers, is the episode to the tragedy in the cottage;—and as the author has a vast deal

deal of business on her hand, she must put the Countess, who, to the unspeakable joy of her poor neighbours began to revive, into the stranger's carriage, carry her home, and lay her on her own bed at the Jointure-house; where also we must know, Magdalena would speak in the animated language of truth, her grateful recollections of the obligation she was under to the Countess and her late father, as soon as she was able to bear it, but that was not just yet.

"John," cried Betty, following her husband and such of the crowd who presumed to attend the carriage within the gates of the park, "Laws! how fast you do walk, John."—

John flourished away,

"You may as well stand on the beach

"And bid the main flood bate his usual height,"

"As talk to me, Betty; my yellow face makes you sick."

"But is our master come home, indeed, and indeed, John Brown?—make *me* sick! Laws, John!"

"Peace, woman!" roared John,

"——— I never heard yet

"That any of the bolder vices wanted

"Less impudence to gainsay what they did,

"Than to perform it at first."

Oh woman,

———"It was cruelty

"To load a fallen man."

"I load you, John! why, where did you fall?—Laws, how can you talk so, when Miss Rosy herself knows I did nothen but cry and fret."—

"What! because I was *not* dead? because I stood betwixt thee and a mountain of flesh?"

"Oh dear John! will my sufferens never ind?—Here Miss Rosa will be happy, my master will be happy, and every body but poor me!—me who have had so much sickness and fretten! me who was left to be put upon by every body, and never so much as got a letter."

"Oh what authority and shew of truth

"Can cunning sin cover itself withal."

"May

“Nay hang not upon me,

“Thy blush is guiltiness, not modesty,”

and thou thinkest

“A man’s soul is in his cloaths.”

“As to modesty, John, I am sure nobody can’t say any thing to disparage me in that; and I am sure, if I had been false-hearted to you, I would not never have given no consent but in the way of marriage;—and our Stuart was a portly man, and wuth a power of monee.” Before Betty finished this harangue, John was flung off, and the Lady laid on her bed.

If Rosa was transported with joy; if she beheld unutterable meaning in the fine eyes of the beloved solitaire of the Burn-side; if she read in the short affectionate letter John delivered to her from her patron, an end of all her sorrows, and a happy preface, that her humble birth would be the only disadvantage under which she would enter the noble family so flatteringly anxious to receive her; and, if above all, she anticipated the avowal of those glowing sentiments of tenderness, that had imperceptibly stolen from the passionate heart of the amiable Horace into her own, she was not less interested for Lady Denningcourt; not less affected by her situation, nor less anxious to relieve the tender embarrassment of her soul.

Magdalena’s mind had acquired strength from misfortune; an adept in the school of experience, her studies at the Burn-side had been animated by feeling, and corrected by judgment;—it is true it was not from what men are, but what they should be, that she would have wished to judge the world, had she not been so deeply wounded by it. She was ignorant of the part of Lady Denningcourt’s history which her situation and exclamations now explained, but instead of weeping over her, she took in at once all the delicacies of her situation, and entered into them with the more warmth as these in some points were of equal concern to her beloved Rosa.

Not to enter into the peculiar and interesting point of view in which General Buhannun and Lady Denningcourt

ningcourt stood to each other, their child was the just heir to that fortune, she knew he had, with generous pleasure, appropriated to Rosa as a marriage portion; nor did his generosity or pleasure exceed that with which she knew her son would relinquish it: But there is a manner of doing every thing, which sensible minds only can distinguish; and several minutias of the arrangements necessary to be formed were of a nature that must pain, and perhaps a little humble Rosa; she therefore, after whispering the Countess, begged Rosa to leave her protectress and her to settle some particular points by themselves.

Rosa, aware of the extreme delicacy of Lady Denningcourt's situation in respect to the General, and certain that Lady Gauntlet was competent both to console and advise, gladly obeyed her.

On retiring to her own chamber, she found Betty, who declared John had behaved so ill to her, she had cried a whole quarter of an hour.

Rosa desired she would send him to her boudoir, and hastened thither to meet him.

John Brown had conceived a strong antipathy to a fat steward, and extended a certain part of that antipathy to all the domestics of the Jointure-house; his directions from his master were, after delivering the letter to Rosa, to take her orders and then proceed to Delworth.

As he had not yet received these orders, he was in waiting in the court yard, with his chaise and horses, declining, with coldness, every invitation into the house, when Betty desired him to follow her to Miss Rosy.

John obeyed without speaking.

"Dear Mr. Brown," cried Rosa, "what happy tidings have you brought me."

"Why, Miss Rosy," cried John,

"Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of ———"

John stopped and cast an indignant glance at Betty.
"So, Miss, as

"Grief is proud, and makes his owner stout,"

I could

I could not bear to go to Scotland, nor could I bear to stop here; and as the world is

“ A stage, where every man must play his part,
“ And mine’s a sad one,”

and as

“ There is a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow,”

I thought I could job a bit here and job a bit there, in my way back to London; and as I was sure *you* did not want such a friend as poor John Brown, the yellow faced cripple, (again Betty had an angry glance) why I resolved to inquire at all the places where I knew my master had property, and so send you the particulars, but never make folks sick again.”

John’s eyes watered, and he drew a fine India handkerchief from his pocket to dry them.

“ Lord John,” cried Betty, “ what a nice shawl that handkerchief would make—did my master give it to you?”

John did not answer.

“ But I long to hear every particular about my dear patron—how was he preserved? why had we no letters? how does he look? is he well?——”

“ Why, *madam* !”

“ *Madam*, John! why not address me as you were used to do?”

“ Why *madam* ! because you are a *lady*, and will be a lady; and tho’

“ ———— Pride hath no other glass

“ To shew itself but pride—for supple knees

“ Feed arrogance, and are the proud man’s fee,”

yet it is fit you should be respected; which is not the less your due, because

“ You win straying souls with modesty,

and because

“ It is the witness still of excellency

“ To put a strange face on its own perfection.”

“ There John!” cried Betty, “ you see your own books bid you not put no strange faces on your own——”

“ But

“ But your master, dear John ?” said Rosa, impatiently.

“ And *my* master, dear John,” cried Betty, making another vain attempt to insinuate her hand between his arm and body.

“ Oh, what a master ?”—and John wiped his eyes with the *nice shawl*.

“ But Lord, John ! he is no more dead nor yourself ; so it don’t signify nothen to keep repeating old grievances ; and I am sure his sufferens from the salvages han’t been no more nor mine ;—for to think of my gwain to live with that family of the Croaks, as knows nothen genteel—”

“ You may live where you please, Mrs. Brown.”

“ Oh, no, my dear John, it shall be where *you* please ;—I am sure I always gives up to *you*—only I hope it will be in a comfortable, genteel setecation, and not among riff raff, that’s all I want ; for nobody can say as I am proud. But I hope you did not never mention no word to my master about frightening me with that nonsense about that nasty wooden leg—I am sure I am monstercious glad you han’t not got it in right earnest.”

“ But I *have* got it,” cried John, impatiently, and springing up a cork leg—“ only too like your hard heart, well covered ;—so you see,

“ The world is still deceived with ornament ;

“ The seeming truth, which cunning time puts on,

“ Is to entrap the wisest.”

“ My gracious goodness ! (Betty had already discarded *our stuart’s geminigig*) is that a nartifical leg ? why ’tis almost as andsome as the natural one.”

Rosa wished Betty would give her husband leave to talk a little about his master.

“ Mum !” cried Betty—“ I am sure I have not spoke three words.”

“ Why, *madam*, (and John bowed) there’s no such thing as true courage in that Tippoo, though he is a fort of a king ;

“ For that which we in mean men entitle patience,

“ Is pale cowardice in nobler breasts.”

But no nobility belongs to him : he did not use my master

ter in a soldier-like manner ; for after two of his soldiers saw him fall, and thinking, as he commanded the fortie he would be a prize, carried him to Tippoo's first officer, what does he but sends him with the wounded men of their own army, to some of the distant forts, where my poor master—"

John again wiped his eyes.

"Do, John," cried Betty, "let me fetch you one of my clean pocket-handkerchiefs, and put by that nice shawl."

"I can't tell you what happened, *madam*, to my master in the dungeon where he lay so long ; you will hear it all from that sweet young Lord Mr. Horace Littleton ; he knows how to tell it better than me. Oh Miss Rosy, *madam*, that's a man, indeed ;

" ——— ——— When he speaks,
 " The air, a chartered libertine, is still ;
 " And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,
 " To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences."

Rosa could ask no more questions ; her cheeks glowed, and her eyes filled.

John's modesty asked if she had any orders ; and as soon as a gentle "No, John," issued from her lips, he left the boudoir without a look at Betty.

"Lord ! Lord !" cried she, "when will my sufferens end !"

Rosa, thinking neither of her nor her sufferens, took a ramble by moonlight.

C H A P. XVII.

"Self-interest, it is agreed, is the prime mover of human actions.

"Perhaps that cannot be denied ; but a contempt of *low, mercenary,*

self-interest, is the sure consequence of the ambition

"which self-interest of an higher order always inspires."

HOWEVER indefinable the feelings of Lady Denningcourt when she was convinced Wallace Buhanun yet lived, there was one point, on which no argument could

could be admitted either in her opinion or that of Lady Gauntlet, which was, the indispensable propriety of informing him of the existence of his child previous to the proposed arrangements for Rosa's marriage; and this was a matter of such delicacy and importance, that the means of doing it, without the least shock to Rosa's delicacy, seemed to be the only thing to be considered.

So well, the Countess declared, she knew, the soul of Wallace Buhanun, that he would never be prevailed on to enter a house in which she resided as the widow of Lord Denningcourt, whether he did or did not know at this time her name and rank. The latter indeed, Lady Gauntlet thought most probable, from the manner in which he had heard the present situation of Rosa mentioned.

So entirely satisfied was she also that her first attachment would have been sanctioned by the laws of her country had she not innocently consented to marry Lord Denningcourt; and so solemn did she still consider her first engagement, that her heart, which incessantly reproached her for the last, shrunk from the idea of meeting a man so fatal to her race, and so injured by herself; and were it not that justice and honour not to mention maternal affection, enforced the obligation of maternal duty, she would have gone to Athelane, and stopped there as long as the General remained at Delworth. "But this child!" she cried, weeping—"this daughter! for whom I am to demand the suffrages of a parent—ah! in what a state will he find her! naturalized with inferior people—her lot cast among those with whom neither of her parents can associate, and repugnant to the habits, connection, and manners suitable to her birth and their rank. Oh, Lady Gauntlet!" she added, passionately wringing her hands, "could you have believed my father, him who so cordially sympathised in your misfortunes, could have dealt so hard by me and my child?"

Lady Gauntlet, who was charmed with the mild graces and interesting manner of the amiable Countess, endeavoured to sooth the inquietude of her mind, by adducing the tender propriety of her own conduct throughout

throughout the whole of this affecting transaction.—“There really was,” she said, “no accounting for the turn some minds took: it had been observed of high descent that it was never disregarded but by those who were conscious of not possessing it. We,” she continued, “my dear Countess, have no such consciousness about us, yet I am not one of its bigots—your daughter is by no means an unique in the art of sinking,—if, indeed, a young person, whose mind is not contaminated, may be justly said to sink. ‘Tis a mortifying truth that people of rank complain of the increasing insubordination they themselves provoke: What, for instance, can be more absurd than such women as Lady Gauntlet to demand respect, or such men as her husband and the Earl his late brother, to value themselves on their noble descent? High rank, adorned with congenial virtues, will enforce regard; the lower order naturally love the virtues by which they are benefited, and respect the example, which it is both their interest and duty to follow; but on the contrary, when they hear of the enormities committed by some titled unblushing woman of quality, or some lawless high-blooded libertine, what can be more ridiculous than to expect the hatred and contempt they excite, should be qualified by a remembrance of whose daughter or whose son they are. It is not, indeed, to their advantage it should be so, since, if there be any thing *worth* remembering in their families, the contrast between past and present must become more striking;—and as people of high rank can only be self-debased, so commoners, who are self-ennobled by their integrity, rise, as they sink in the estimation of both God and man.—One cannot indeed but wish your daughter had been more sensible of her own value; but she must make a family,—the name of Croak, with your countenance, and that of her father may become respectable, and comparatively, you may call yourself a happy mother. Think of poor Kattie Buhanun! she could never forget her beauty and family; her poor mother talked of nothing else.”

Lady Denningcourt felt the justice as well as kindness of Lady Gauntlet’s remarks;—“perhaps,” said

she, "had I never seen Rosa, I might not have felt so heavily my daughter's deficiencies."

"Oh my friend, but Rosa *is* an unique; your daughter is *not*, that is all."

"But had I such a child to bear the olive branch to her father;—to meditate between his indignant anger and her mother's unintended crime;—to inspire him with paternal tenderness, and to give me peace; oh! Lady Gauntlet, I never look at her face, never hear her speak or admire the graceful motion of her lovely form but my heart sinks into despondence, and I am ready to sin against her Maker and mine;—and then her resemblance to her patron,—does it not seem a mockery of fate to fill me with impossible wishes and vain regrets."

"It was," Lady Gauntlet replied, "a concatenation of uncommon circumstances, like that which after so long period had restored the General almost from the grave; but by no means either in the one case or the other of that great import, as to make or mar the happiness of any party concerned, after the certainty that, however faulty, Elinor was really her daughter, and that the General, her father still lived; every other consideration were subordinate and transient,

"Like bubbles in the sea of matter borne,

"They rise, they break, and to that sea return."

"But how shall I wean my heart from its fond attachment to this lovely girl! I have indulged it till it is become a part of myself; what a desert will this house appear when her soft voice and light tread are no longer heard."

"We must think of that," said Lady Gauntlet, "when we have resolved how to get over the first embarrassment; the General will be here to-morrow."

"Not *here*! Lady Gauntlet, not *here*!—I should expire with shame to see him; I cannot see him indeed, any where;—I think I can never see him; to know that he lives, that he is happy—"

"And well married!"

"Lady Gauntlet!"

"Nay, my dear Countess, I was only willing to try how far female heroism would go; but if you please

we

we will take pillow counsel before we make our final determination.—There is our girl—what a picture! gliding under the lunar ray, her light drapery gently agitated by the calm breeze; oh how often have I contemplated her charming figure with pleasure, while the impression of her sweet conciliating manners have been warm on my mind.”

Rosa was passing the window; she obeyed the first summons, and had the felicity to perceive Lady Denningcourt composed and quite recovered. They retired after a slight repast, and the Countess agreeing to banish Rosa from their breakfast table, Lady Gauntlet whispered her to prepare for a visit to Delworth.

“Geminigig!” cried Betty, when she attended in the chamber, “why Lord! Miss Rosa, what a rigmirel story this here is about my master; and I assure you John Brown keeps on his high ropes; but what do you think our ouse-keeper ses?—she ses as she thinks we shall have a double wedden; the more the merrier say I,—but who’d a thoht that pale faced Mr. Littleton, as used to write for Sir Solomon Mushroom, would turn out to be a Lord; they may well say nobody knows their own luck;—I am sure my sufferens have lasted long enough, and as to John Brown’s keepen in the fulks,—but pray Miss, is it true as you are agwain to have a great fortin, and be Lady Gauntlet directly.”

“Neither one or the other, Betty.”

“Oh geminigig, as our—”

“I think, Betty, you had better leave off that exclamation, if you wish to get your husband out of his fulks.”

“Why Miss, so I have left it off before him; and as to our stuart, why you know Miss he is gone to London, or some whêre near abouts, with Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin, poor old soul, I should not wonder if she had a colt’s tooth, and made up a match with our stuart,—to be sure he is a portly man, and wuth a power of money.”

Rosa, who in general suffered Mrs. Brown to run on her own way, was now as much displeased to hear of the portly stuart and his power of money, as John Brown himself could be, angrily bid Betty get ready to attend her to Delworth in the morning.

“ There now !” cried Betty, “ now you are angry too, Miss Rosy, and I am sure that’s more nor what I never inspected from you, because I was always good to you, even when you was a sarvant, and what’s more, a beggar, and that I shall alway say,—but there is no ind to my misfortune.”

The chamber consultation of the two Countesses did not break up till near noon, when the carriage being ready, Rosa was admitted.

“ You are leaving me, my Rosa,” said Lady Denningcourt, weeping ; “ I have no hope the sad evening of my days can be cheered by your sweet society ; ’tis a deprivation most grievous to my heart, but the hard lesson of my life has been to study resignation. You go from Denningcourt, where that negative happiness which attends on quietude, on a kind of rest of nature, could only be hoped ; to Delworth, where the animated sensibility of your fine mind will be called into active enjoyment ; where a maternal friend, a generous patron, and tender lover, will rejoice in your society for the same reason that I regret it,—their own felicity is dependant on yours. The exchange, my amiable girl, is to your advantage ; else the conflict I feel in parting with you would be insupportable ;—you will sometimes steal to me ; I cannot doubt but I shall be in your thoughts.”

Rosa threw herself at the feet of the amiable Countess, whose arms encircled her ; their tears were blended.

Lady Gauntlet, though affected herself, endeavoured to carry the then hope of the parting friends to future happy meetings ;—“ at least,” said she, “ if you lose the daughter you will have the mother ; I will certainly take Rosa’s place at whatever house Lady Denningcourt shall please to occupy.”

“ Oh ! cried Rosa, throwing her arms around Lady Denningcourt’s neck, “ why must we go without you ? and why, in the moment that my heart is filled with thankful joy for the blessing I am going to meet, does it feel a pang so bitter, so repugnant at leaving you ? but I will steal to you, yes, before I take pleasure to my heart, you shall share it ; I will inform you of every thing while this frightful chasm must last,—surely that will not, cannot be long.”

Lady

Lady Gauntlet hinting that as the General and her son must now be within a few miles, there was no answering for the speed of impatience, and therefore not finding her at Delworth—

“Not *here!* they must not come *here,*” cried Lady Denningcourt, gasping for breath. “I commit myself and my child to you Lady Gauntlet; amply as it is in my power, and my heart to provide for her, I would not, oh it would kill me, to know Wallace Buhanun was indifferent to *his* child, the child of Elinor Athelane.”

“We have settled all this, I believe Countess,” replied Lady Gauntlet gravely, hurt for Rosa, whose interest this warm solicitude without every explanation, might be supposed to affect.

It was not that the attachment of Lady Denningcourt was less sincere or her intention towards Rosa less generous than that of Magdalena; but the mind of the former though inured to mild and patient endurance, was at this period enervated by the delicate embarrassments of her situation; it was the *pride*, not the interest of maternal feelings, that rendered her so anxious the father should acknowledge the child, and she had already resolved on presenting Rosa with an equivalent for any loss of fortune from the General she might sustain by any such acknowledgment;—while the latter, wise, noble, and consistent, resolved to reject all advantages—it was *Rosa*, not the General’s fortune, she wished her son to possess, and it was *herself*, not any local advantage, that must make him happy.

After repeated embraces, after floods of tears, and sighing reluctance on both sides, Rosa followed Lady Gauntlet into her carriage.

Rosa was always above the mere puerilities of ceremony; the warm embrace of Magdalena, an embrace that seemed to greet the bride of her son, gave an emotion to her heart that sent the pure blood into her cheeks; she was indeed going to the house of her lover, and though under the protection of one of the best of women, there was something unpleasant in that; but the impossibility of receiving her benefactor at the Jointure-house, and the eager desire she felt to fly to

his feet, conquered all false modesty in respect to the first interview with Horace.

They passed through a private gate, to avoid the crowd of tenants and country people, who were, they heard, assembled near the lodge on the common, to welcome their rightful Lord, by a delightful and romantic, though almost imperceptible ascent to the beautiful flat on which the fine gothic building stood;—on the clear basin in front, the little vessel was all ready, decked with garlands of flowers, musical instruments, and new silk colours, to receive the Earl.

The profusion of fine summer flowers which impregnated the air with sweets when Rosa first saw this charming place, were now succeeded by autumnal plants and exotics, not less beautiful though less highly scented with natural perfumes; but the prospect round was improved by the variegated fields, which having now yielded their abundance, were covered with cattle; and the still content which reign over the face of husbandry, when their harvest is got in, seemed spread over the many miles the eye took in from Delworth house.

“This is really enchanting, Rosa,” said Lady Gauntlet, with perhaps a sentiment of indignant regret, at her son’s having so long been deprived of the possession of his right.

Rosa was recurring to her first sight of the *heaven* which Mrs. Woudbe had already thought her own; and as her eye wandered from the castle to the Jointure-house, wonder, joy, thankful gratitude, and confidence in approaching happiness, brought the flush of sensibility to her cheeks, and the tear of pleasure into her eyes.

Lord Gauntlet had, with a preface of delight glowing in his bosom, sent a confidential servant express to Delworth, the instant he had obtained the General’s promise to go there. The standing furniture were all as Rosa had left it, some additional ornaments, and a rich service of plate excepted; but in general she might have fancied, from the appearance of all around her, it was impossible such extraordinary changes as had taken place since she left it could be real.

Christiana,

Christiana, the now settled housekeeper, welcomed her lady with tears of joy, and after gazing at Rosa with evident approbation, retired.

"I hope this forin ousekeeper understands Englis," said Betty to Mrs. Ferguson, as Peggy was now called, "else I am sure we ladies' maids must have a room to ourselves.—But pray Miss Rosy," stepping after Rosa, and whispering, "can you think where John Brown is?"

"Gone to meet his master perhaps, Betty."

"Well, Miss, I don't say nothen against that; but I think as he mought have paid his wife some perspection before strangers, and a forin ousekeeper; but my sufferens—"

"Are very great to be sure, but I can't stop to hear them.—"

"Gracious goodness! Miss Rosy, why you are as light as a feather; well, faint heart never won fair lady, so I may as well be light too, for all I see no ind to my sufferens."

Rosa, who was familiar enough with the apartments of Delworth-house to do the honours of it to Lady Gauntlet, pointed to her notice the several little incidents in which she had been interested; particularly Lady Gauntlet's dressing-room, that where she had been so painfully surprised by the letter signed "H. Montreville,"—and that elegant drawing-room, where she had taken what she called her trial. The apartment of the young ladies, where the books, music, works, and drawing remained, with the needles, pencils, crayons and open lessons, just as they had left them, gave both ladies a pang. They were turning hastily into the picture-gallery, when John Brown, who had already discarded his cork-leg, as being more trouble than the wooden one, stumped up to inform them his master and the young Lord were approaching, that the country people at the last town had taken the horses from the chaise, and though it was warm work, relieved each other, till the tenants, who met them a mile off, insisted on their right;—the townsmen had heard reason, and—hark! here they are."

They listened ; the musicians who were now afloat in the vessel, struck up, " See the conquering hero comes." At the first huzza, John's three cocked military hat was thrown up, and his loud repeated cheers drove the ladies as far from him as the gallery would admit.

" Huzza ! huzza !" cried the crowds, that with the most respectful care of the fine walks, drew and followed the carriage, over which, and the horses, were thrown garlands of laurel tied with bunches of blue and red ribbands ; " Huzza, huzza," echoed John, stumping up to the window, instead of going to the door to receive his master as he alighted ; " Huzza."

" 'Tis he, I ken the manners of his gait,

" He rises on his toe ; that spirit of his

" In aspiration lifts him from the earth."

" Oh my dear master—," and Betty's nice shawl was lifted to his eyes.

Lord Gauntlet's eyes eagerly explored every window, till he met his soul's desire in a reciprocal glance from Rosa ; he saw her, and saw nothing else ; and, (for the author of this long history piques herself on the truth,) although Rosa's first benefactor, her friend, her more than father's eyes were also fixed on her, she forgot in that moment that there were more than two people in this wide habitable world ; and no young lady, who after parting with the first object of her choice, when fate and fortune were equally adverse to the hope of ever meeting again, need be told, those two, were her lover and herself. From this blissful reverie she was however roused, by fresh shouts from the multitude, seconded by John Brown ; and before she recovered from her confusion, felt herself pressed to the bosom of General Buhanun, and saw the elegant, graceful and accomplished Horace, kneeling at her feet.

To those afore said young ladies who have been in similar, though not exactly the same circumstances, we leave the definition of Rosa's feelings towards her lover ; but who *can* define the enthusiastic gratitude which gushed in torrents from her eyes, when, though she had no remembrance of the person or manners of her benefactor till she saw him, her recollection became
every

every moment more acute ; past scenes returned ; she was taken from the well-remembered white steps of Mrs. Feverham's house ; cleaned from the filth of beggary, preserved from the danger of perishing for want, and received into the warm heart of him, through whose arms she slipped at this moment, to embrace his feet and wash them with her tears.

Horace ventured to seize her white hand and press it to his lips, as her patron raised her again to his bosom.

“ She is indeed,” said he, viewing her with attention and apparent delight, “ beauty itself ;—I never saw a woman altogether so perfect ; what eyes, what complexion and what a form.—You must forgive me, Rosa, I am your father, and may be allowed to find out beauties in my own, to which common eyes are blind—yes, the dimpled fascination round that lovely mouth is the same ; oh, how irresistible did I find it, when scarce another feature was perceptible,—and that voice, my soul was enchanted by it.”

Rosa glanced a tearful remembrance of Lady Denningcourt at Lady Gauntlet.

The General considered it as a tacit reproach ; he apologized to the Dowager while Horace murmured a few rapturous expressions in Rosa's ear.—They became more composed, as the certainty of present happiness and hope of future were confirmed.—They walked to the front of the house ; the music was still playing on the water ; the crowd, for whose entertainment an ox was roasting whole on the common in front of the great gates, whereal so the prudent steward had conveyed several hogsheds of ale and other liquors, waited to give the new Earl and his friends a parting cheer, and then departed, highly gratified with his condescension and munificence ; and need it be said the dinner quartette at home was a happy one—or that the succeeding evening could be less than delightful.

“ On my dearest benefactor,” cried Rosa, kissing the General's hand, “ by what miracle are you restored to us ?”

“ By no miracle, nor even, in the service in which I was engaged, by uncommon means. I parted with
Horace,

Horace, as he will tell you, on the eve of a projected sortie, which indeed was a forlorn hope, after I had given him as far as depended on me the most valuable jewel I possessed ; *he will also tell you about that too.*

“ I was wounded in the early part of the engagement, but it was a considerable time before I fainted from loss of blood ; two of the enemies subalterns had marked my fall, and thought me a prize worth carrying to their commander ; he ordered me to be conveyed from the field of battle with their own wounded officers ; and it was this circumstance that prevented my being sent to Seringapatam, where General Matthews and many brave men were murdered in cold blood, and where I should probably have shared the same fate, had I been with them ; we, on the contrary, were sent to a fort in the interior of the kingdom, where, as the keeper had *some* humanity, I might have lingered many years, had not a report reached Lord C——, that many Europeans were kept back, in different parts of Tippoo’s dominions, after he had pretended to have delivered them all up.

“ The tyrant was by this time humbly suing for peace, but the British General refused to listen to any terms till, as a preliminary step, every European prisoner was liberated ; Tippoo was neither in a situation to refuse, nor to brave the resentment of so humane a commander if he had been detected in deceiving him ; among the objects ejected from the miserable dungeons I was one, so much in dishabille that my own corps did not know me ; I had not made my toilet, my pretty Rosa, above five years,—my beard and nails must therefore have been very formidable ; I was however soon recognised, and such was the indignation of our soldiers at my long confinement, it was perhaps well for Tippoo that peace was signed. Well, my charming Rosa, there was no miracle in all this : The only very strange circumstance attending it is, that while chained to the floor of a dungeon I obtained a compleat conquest over myself. ‘ The kingdom of every wise man is in his own breast,’—so said a Scotch philosopher : and perhaps it is the kingdom most arduous to govern properly ; mine at least, was in a state of actual rebellion
against

against my peace many years, *too many*, preceding my confinement; but if five years lying in a dungeon, without the light of heaven, or any other light thrown on the subject, will not enable a man to conquer his passions, there is no rashness in the conclusion that nothing will.

“ I loved a beautiful woman once, to such desperation, that having armed my fatal hand against her brother, my friend’s life, I thought the next best thing, was to arm it against my own; I was not quite so successful in the last attempt as the first, because I was destined to hear that my wife was the wife of another, and to lie five years in a dungeon: as the first did not destroy me, though I could only hear the fact without the particulars, I thought myself invulnerable; and having nothing more amusing to do, used to ponder whole days, weeks and months on causes and effects; the result was, that I acquitted myself, and what was more hard, I acquitted my angel wife; my crime was involuntary, and so, after a fair trial, which, chained myself to the ground, I could not help allowing her, and admitting all her goodness and virtue to plead in her favour, I believed hers to be: From this moment I found I could suffer with a vast deal more ease to myself; my temper, which had long been in a shocking state of irritation, resumed its first placid cast; and though I warned every body to be very much afraid of me, I came to Europe in such good humour, that even the honours and reward heaped on me at my return have not yet spoiled my temper; the king has thought proper to put me upon the staff, and the company have made me a richer man than I desired or deserve, and yet I feel no alteration in myself, and this is really a miracle. My poor honest fellow, John Brown, has been more unfortunate without a similar effect.”

“ Poor John,” joined Rosa, “ his wife.”

“ Ah Rosa! his wife indeed is a trial more severe, I am afraid, than my dungeon; I think he seems wiser sick,—but she is with you?”

“ For this history of your suffering and conquest, General, I promise,” said Lady Gauntlet, “ to reward you, if you will take your coffee in my dressing-room to-morrow morning *tête-à-tête*.”

“ Take

"Take care, madam," replied the General, "what you do; I have not been a month on the staff; I shall be expected to distinguish myself; you are not indeed a married woman, and therefore, if your character should suffer, the notoriety would not be sufficient to give me any sort of eclat;—that, I warn you, is your only safeguard against the attack of my crutch stick."

It was now only that Rosa observed he walked with one.

"It was my hard bed in the dungeon, my dear," said he, observing concern in Rosa's looks.

"I am desperate," rejoined Lady Gauntlet, "and to prove it will not trouble you to come to me; your reward you shall have, and I will bring it to you in your dressing-room."

"I hope," replied the General, "you have well considered this matter; since you know how impossible it will be for this poor boy and girl to amuse themselves while I am tacked up with your ladyship?"

"They will do as well as they can;—and Rosa must shew Horace her trial room;—and my dear, suppose you give him the history of the *naughty letter*."

Rosa blushed, but did not refuse Lord Gauntlet's earnest request for the same favour from her, his mother offered the General;—Lord and Lady Gauntlet's history and misfortunes furnished the next topic of conversation till supper.

With what proud delight did John place himself perpendicularly behind his master's chair; in how kind an accent were the orders given him; and how adroitly did he manage his wooden leg in flying to execute them.

How enraptured did Horace gaze on his charming Rosa; how often did he bless the enthusiasm of the best of mothers, which carried her to Scotland; and how sincerely did he rejoice in the event, that proved his adored Walsingham to be her beloved Rosa, and the protégée of his patron; and with what soft reproach did he advert to the impression she had suffered to take place in her mind, to his prejudice; with what sweet confusion did she now wonder how she could, for one moment, believe him to be the minion of the contemptible

temptible Mrs. Woudbe; and oh! with what more than rapture did the fond mother contemplate the two beings most dear to her on earth; and while her heart over-flowed with tender recollections, she sighed, "we only want my father now."

"Ah! madam, *only*," repeated Rosa.

"Why, whom else do we want?" asked the General; your patroness, Lady Denningcourt? you see how it is, Rosa; I advise you to take care of Horace, for even a battered old beau is caught up before one can look round. I had half a mind to fall in love with this Lady Denningcourt, if Lady Gauntlet had not quite pressed me into her service."

Rosa burst into tears; the General, not conscious how much he spoke to her feelings, was alarmed, and Horace half distracted.

Rosa's heart was on her lips; she forgot the caution given her by the two ladies—her fine features were full of meaning.

The General doubted whether her emotion did not proceed from a fear, that she might have a rival in his affections and fortune;—the dear girl, he thought, could have no conception to what excess she was beloved, and it was natural for her to be tenacious in every thing relative to her reception into so honourable and opulent a family. "I talk of falling in love," said he, "but nobody will return the passion of an old soldier who is poor; my fortune is all yours, irrevocably yours."

"*All*, my dear father;—you have bid me call you so—not all, God forbid—you have one other claimant."

"The Major's children,—I shall certainly consider them, if it were only for their father's kindness to you."

"But, sir, is there no other?"

"None that I admit."

"Ah my father!"

Lady Gauntlet looked surprised; she neither understood how far Rosa meant to go, nor what were her motives; she even began to doubt whether Lady Denningcourt might not have sent her some instructions since their parting.

"I can't

"I can't comprehend you," said the General; "but I swear by the great God you are my—"

Rosa put her hand to his mouth. "Yes," he continued, with vehemence, "yes, I swear by the great God, you are my sole heiress."

Rosa, who was herself too partial to Elinor to doubt she would be beloved when known, begged him not to swear *any* thing till he had heard *every* thing.

"What is there to hear? this is trifling," and the General looked grave.

"You will breakfast with Lady Gauntlet to-morrow, my dear father."

"And you, my dear angel," joined Montreville, "will breakfast—"

"With you."

The General then rung for his servant; his lameness was very slight after a little exercise; but in the moment of beginning to move, he could not walk without support; Horace offered his arm, and John stumped on before with lights.

Betty officiously appeared at the chamber door, and in spite of John's forbidding looks, was all smiles and courtesies; in the midst of which she made a discovery of great importance, which was, that though her husband still kept on his high ropes himself, he had not been complaining to his master.

"I am glad to see you, Mrs. Brown," said the General, stopping as he passed her; "I hope you have been as good a wife to my honest fellow as the world would let you."

As Betty had a consciousness about her which prevented her answer, she could only cry and courtesy to the ground.

"Well, my good girl," continued the General, "you must take care of him now; you see what his love for his master has made him suffer."

"Suffer, your honour," sobbed Betty, "I am sure my sufferens would melt the very flinted stones."

"Poor girl! good night," and the General put a heavy purse into her hand.

Betty continued courtesying with a handkerchief at her eyes till John flung the door to with violence.

"That's

“That’s manners now,” said Betty; “howsoever as I always told John, fat sorrow is better nor lean sorrow at any time; and so I shall first go and see what I have got in the purse, &c. I then tend Miss Rosy—Lord only to think of her being a lady after all!”

The next morning Rosa passed more time at her toilet, and yet left it less satisfied than usual; her legs trembled, and her heart beat as she tottered down stairs; and when led by her handsome lord to the bow window in the little drawing room, her heart beat with such unremitting violence, speech was denied her; but sweet as are even the pains of a first passion when its basis is honour, and its support virtue, how soon, how very soon does mutual confidence banish all restraint.

Lord Gauntlet was the very same Horace Montreville whose passion for her, when she was a suspicious character, was blended with respect; and Rosa was the same frank ingenuous creature, who only feared to lose his esteem by that confession which was ever ready to burst from her lips.

Their hearts were united, their language was that of truth, and every expression of tenderness chastened by sentiment and delicacy.

“Horace,” cried Rosa, “I have two mothers; yours is one, and you know how dear she has ever been to me; Lady Denningcourt, I can never tell you what she is,—shall I introduce you to my other mother?”

Horace reached her parasol; she put her willing arm under his, and they rambled to the Jointure-house; there, like the genius of contemplation, sat the lovely Lady Denningcourt in her boudoir; the moment she beheld Rosa they were locked in each others arms.

The “how do you?” and “what do you?” which furnish grand subjects for the letters and conversations of modern friends, were here discarded,—it was sincere and animated affection which warmed the hearts and taught the sublime phrases of true esteem to the trio now present, and marked every passing moment with interest.

Lady

Lady Denningcourt, conscious of the subject of that *tête-à-tête* Horace laughingly adverted to, dared not press their stay, though she feared to see them go; but Rosa having engaged to steal away as often as possible, and Horace having promised secrecy, they returned to Delworth.

The conference had ended, but not with all the consequences Lady Gauntlet wished and expected.

The General, notwithstanding the boasted placid cast of his temper, was exceedingly affected; he recollected to have seen Elinor when a fine child, with Doctor Croak; he considered her marriage as the consequence of her attachment to the family with whom she had been brought up, and rather applauded than condemned it; he heard with profound attention the proofs of her birth, as given by Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, whom he knew and esteemed, and from Doctor Croak, whom he also knew but did *not* esteem; and he was told of the kindness of the Duke of Athelane to his daughter, and the great views she had disappointed, without asking a single question about her mother.

Lady Gauntlet, who had been solemnly enjoined by Lady Denningcourt, not to mention her, except led to do so by circumstances, did not feel herself at liberty to enter further than he himself chose to advert to in his story, said nothing more about his daughter, than answering his interrogatories.

"I thought," said the General, "I had conquered my rebellious passions, and established peace in the little kingdom of my own bosom; but the evil, I fear, has not been radically cured; I must certainly see this poor child; and as certainly my little protégée's interest will suffer: you need not speak Lady Gauntlet, your heart is that sort of one, with which mine holds intellectual converse; I am almost grieved to say, that I fear I never can love my daughter as well as I do our dear Rosa; but I dare not define my own feelings in regard to her; she is the child of love, of my Elinor, my dear lost wife—my child;—forgive me, madam—I am indisposed—one of my old head aches—"

The General trembled; the old tremor on his voice, and the salt rheum in his eyes returned.

Lady

Lady Gauntlet left him with a sort of disappointed sensation at her heart, that carried her to her closet, instead of going immediately, as she had intended, to the Jointure-house; and the whole long morning was left to the happy Horace, and his lovely Rosa.

C H A P. XVIII.

“ Give these trifles a corner in your cabinet, where they may be
 “ sheltered from those daring critics, who, without producing
 “ any thing of their own, determine with assurance on the
 “ works of others.”

THAT there is no such thing as perpetual happiness but at Gangaridian, where one cannot go without griffins, or at Eldarado, where one cannot go at all, was proved by our heroine and her lover, on the former hinting at the propriety of making some alteration in her dress before dinner, previous to which the latter was extremely urgent to hear the “ I love,” from her lips, which he had all day read in her eyes; and he was no doubt properly miserable, when on failing to prevail, he with an arm encircling her waist, and a white hand clasped in his, rather whispered than sung,

“ In all my Emma’s beauty blest,
 “ Amid profusion I must pine;
 “ If, when she gave me up her breast,
 “ Its panting tenant were not——”

“ mine,” he would have said, had he not been interrupted.

“ I will go in, fellow,” said a voice at the door;
 “ you shall not prevent me; do you know who I am?”

“ No,—nor have I the smallest curiosity about the matter;—I know my Lord is engaged, and that it is my duty to prevent impertinent people from breaking in upon him.”

“ I know

"I know your Lord very well, and he knows me; he would not call me impertinent;—Miss Walsingham is my particular friend, and—"

"And pray who is Miss Walsingham?—she is not known here, I believe, nor any other Miss of your acquaintance."

"Well, don't make yourself unhappy about that; I must and will see Lord Gauntlet; he is in this room;—I know every room in this house, and will enter."

"I must beg leave to say you shall not enter."

"I will."

"You shall not, till I apprise my Lord."

"It is Lady Mushroom," cried Rosa, and immediately, the lady proving too hard for the valet, in she bounced;—but in what a situation!

"Ah! my dear Miss Walsingham, how glad I am to see you:—I am in a worse pickle now than when I met you on Holborn-hill, at that vile chandler-woman's:—Oh! Lord Gauntlet, you must remember *me*, tho' I am sure I should not have known you—you are so grown, so improved, so perfectly a man of fashion;—I am come to ask your protection, and as I know you won't refuse it,—here (bursting into tears, and throwing herself into an arm chair) I shall stay; I am sure it broke my heart to leave this sweet place."

Lady Mushroom was indeed in a pickle: her gold muslin hung in tatters, and the rich lace trimmings torn to rags; her auburn wig, which she thought more becoming than her own dark locks, drawn to one corner of her head, so that it looked as if adorned with two distinct sorts of hair; one broken ear-ring; her face and neck all over scratches, and her arms covered with bruises.

Rosa, independent of the concern she would have felt for a stranger in such a situation, had a sort of partial regard for her tattered ladyship; she rung for her servant, and requested Lady Mushroom would accept some other clothes.

"Gracious goodness!" cried Betty, "as sure as death, that cheatin old rogue Sir Solomon Mushroom, and my old mistress Madam Feverham, han't been doing nothen more nor less than ftime."

"Go,

“Go, you impertinent,” replied Lady Mushroom, accepting Rosa’s offered arm, while the Earl viewed her with amazement—“go! Sir Solomon will never cheat again.”

“Geminigig! won’t he?—that’s good news;—but then I am sure he is dead.”

“That he is indeed, Betty; and I wish he had been so before he entered these doors—I could but have lost my pitiful annuity, and that I have done after all my plague.”

“Dead! impossible!” cried Rosa.

“Dead! Sir Solomon Mushroom dead!” exclaimed Lord Gauntlet.

“Ah, poor wicked old man! he is indeed; he never held up his head after he heard that odd creature, the blackamore Colonel—”

“General Buhanun, if you please, ma’am.”

“A General, is he? Well, so much the better; if we sink, the Colonel blackamore goes of course;—but poor Sir Sol never looked up after he heard this General survived.”

Horace immediately carried this news to his friend, and the widow was conducted by Rosa to her dressing-room.

“Lord, Miss Rosy!” cried Betty, “why your clothes will no more fit Madam Feverham than they’ll fit me; why she is about as big as three of you. Suppose I go down to the forin ousekeeper, and borrow some things of her; if they be a little matter too short, madam won’t mind that; she always loved to shew her legs, ’cause they are so andsome.”

This oblique compliment to her person both softened and gratified Lady Mushroom. “Ay, Betty, my good girl,” she cried, “do—and get me something to take, for I have neither eat nor slept since I was at Lady Denningcourt’s yesterday morning.”

Rosa apologised for not offering her refreshments. “But how, my dear Lady,” she added, “came you in this dreadful situation?”

“How my dear! rather wonder-I am alive. Oh! you can never divine what I have endured! It was near evening before we got to our inn; and Persian, who

who is an exceeding good dresser of hair and layer-on of *rouge*, had no sooner made me a little decent, than in comes, rattling to the paltry inn, (a poor place for people of our rank) a post-chaise and four: they called for horses on to Delworth; and I, unfortunately hearing them, went to the window, merely out of curiosity, and, to my astonishment, saw that vulgar fresh-coloured healthy-looking creature nurse Dorothy—you remember her? she used always to be haunting the dear disagreeable Mushroom, and with her the quondam Lady Lowder, as haggard and pale as—no matter what;—well, my dear, they saw me too, so I kept nodding—Betty knows my way;—up they came, and fell upon me like two furies;—that shocking Dorothy called me—yes, Miss, she called me a double-u! Oh, to think I should have lived to be called a double-u!—’tis very hard.”

“When one don’t not deserve it especially,” joined Betty.

“But had you nobody to protect you?” asked Rosa, “for I am sure, against Lady Lowder, and such a companion, you had need of protection.”

“Oh no my dear, it was the highest amusement in the world to the people of the house: the nurse, who avowed herself to be the mother of the two dear disagreeable Mushrooms, said I had got her husband—the daughter said I had got her clothes and property; both of them fixed their talons in my face and neck, and you see how they have mauled me. I ran shrieking into poor wicked Sir Sol’s room—they followed: Mr. Turgid was sitting close by his bed-side, with pen, ink, and paper. Before I could speak, Lady Lowder snatched the paper out of Turgid’s hand; and finding he was making a will to give all poor Sir Sol’s money to charitable uses, she fell into sham fits; her mother raved at poor wicked Sir Sol, and asked him if he was not ashamed, with one foot in the grave, to have double-u’s with him. Sir Sol said (and God forgive him! he looked too spiteful for a dying man) he knew too well he had one foot in the grave, and was sensible that double-u’s were not fit company for dying men, and therefore desired she and her daughter would instantly

stantly leave the room; as to that lady (meaning me) I have married her; she may be as bad as you for ought I know—and I hope she is, that you may be mutual plagues to each other. Mr. Turgid, I wish to sign my will.—There was no will to be signed—the dear disagreeable Mushroom had torn it to atoms;—so old Turgid went out to write another, and then both the furies fell on me again; and I do think that they would have killed me, had not Dorothy happened to find out poor Sir Sol was in a fit; then she began crying and making a horrid noise about him;—for my part, I was ready to die with fear of them all. He recovered a little, and insisted on their leaving him; they would not stir without me. Some doctors, as they were called, came in, and talked a vast deal of nonsense, as doctors always do, you know;—however, they agreed in one thing, which was to clear the room; the woman of the house was a conjurer—she was sure, by Dorothy's looks, she was a wife, and by mine that I was a mistress;—so, as she loved nothing in the world better than an honest woman, except it was an honest man, she was very civil to her, and very rude to me. They took possession of my apartments, and all my things, while I crept to Persian's room, and hid myself, till we were all alarmed by the sound of a pistol, which, as I never thought poor Sir Sol had the courage to hurt himself, I little expected came from his apartment. His valet, in a short time, came to the door of Persian's chamber—I thought it was the frightful Dorothy—and begged she would not speak; he rapped again—at last Persian answered. I am come to tell my lady, said he, as I know she *is* my lady, and Doll Tear-sheet is *not*, that my master has cured himself—he has taken a pill. Ah, heaven! I cried, I care nothing about him nor Doll; all I want is to get out of their way —My master has shot himself, said he, and I am come to your ladyship, by Mr. Turgid's desire, for orders. My dear Miss Walsingham, I was as much shocked at the man's callous indifference to his master's fate, as at the suicide, which was very silly in poor Sir Sol, for I really don't think he could have lived many days. However, the man still teased me
for

for orders, and I heard Dorothy's and Lady Lowder's voices quite ring the house; so, I said, I should give no orders, but to get a chaise to carry me to Lord Gauntlet's;—so here I am, my dear; and I am sure, if you don't give me something to bathe my bruises and let me go to bed, I shall certainly follow poor Sir Sol, without a pistol."

"Gracious goodness!" cried Betty, "see what a misfortunate thing it is for men to keep on the high ropes; I am sure I shall go and tell John Brown of this, as soon as ever I have tucked Madam Feversham up, and washed her scratches with aquabufade."

Rosa, pale and really shocked at the dreadful end of the bad man, left Lady Mushroom on bed, and joined Lady Gauntlet and her son. The General was indisposed, and declined dining; and Rosa, as soon as she heard it, went to his dressing-room to pay her duty; he had returned to his old habit of walking about the room, notwithstanding his lameness;—the salt rheum filled his eyes, and the tremor on his voice was strong, when he answered her affectionate inquiries.

"You know, my sweet girl," said he, "I have a daughter, and you a sister—."

"Yes, my dearest father, she has long been the sister of my heart."

"Is *she* like *her* sister, my Rosa? does she smile, and speak, and look like *you*?"

"She does all this very pretty;—I am no judge of likenesses;—but must we dine without you, my father?"

"I have an inveterate head-ach.—"

"This is the consequence of shutting yourself up; if you would walk out;—ah! you cannot conceive what a delightful ramble Horace and I have had this morning, to dear Lady Denningcourt's."

"If I were Lady Gauntlet, I should be jealous of this Lady Denningcourt."

"Oh no! you would love her;—oh my dear father, you would love Lady Denningcourt better—"

"Than I love you?"

"Infinitely;—she is such an angel;—come to the window, and let me shew you some of her charms.—You see that little village."

"I see

"I see a village, not a very little one."

"That is Denningcourt—those buildings—"

The dinner bell rung.

"Go, my Rosa, you shall tell me more after you have dined—I will take coffee with you; I have letters to write, and arrangements to make, when my head permits; (and he led her reluctant to the door) I must take my rice alone."

Rosa kissed his hand, and was received by Horace at the entrance of the eating room.

Lady Gauntlet had, in the mean time, paid a visit to the window, who, comfortably tucked up and entertained by her former servant Betty, was very well disposed to forget all her troubles, had she not been reminded of them by the Countess.

The shocking end of the wretch Sir Solomon, afforded no triumph to such hearts as those he had so cruelly injured. Lady Gauntlet begged it might not be mentioned, and the happy mother sat down between her two darlings, to talk on a more interesting subject; she related what had passed between her and the General, whom she believed, intended to have an early interview with his daughter.

Rosa also gave the little history of her ramble, and Horace was eloquent in his praise of Lady Denningcourt.

The General, as he promised, joined them at coffee, and hinted a design of following a letter he had been writing, to London.

Lady Gauntlet remonstrated; Mrs. Croak was certainly more able to travel to him, under her husband's protection, than he to go to her; she begged he would permit her to invite them down to Delworth; you will, she added, only embarrass them at their farm.

"I do not mean to embarrass them, but I shall certainly remove them from their farm; but who are these? do you expect visitors?"

Lady Gauntlet just glanced the hind wheels of two carriages, which drove round to the back part of the house; but Rosa, who had seen the livery, coloured, and overpowered by a presentiment of something extraordinary, which she could not understand, retired trembling

trembling and disconcerted, behind Lady Gauntlet, whispering, "it is Lady Denningcourt's chariot and family coach."

"Lady Denningcourt's!" exclaimed Lady Gauntlet.

"What! already does she return your visit?" said the General; "I wonder you are not a spoiled girl, Rosa,—but you will make my apology,—I am not fit for ladies' company."

"Where, where is she!" from the hall electrified the General:—"Where, where is she?" thrilled on his ear. He arose—he felt no lameness—he darted towards the door;—it was thrown open—a lady entered, followed by a group of people:—his arms expand involuntarily—they receive the fainting form of her he had ever, and only loved;—her, on whom in exile, in sickness, in prison, memory hung in ecstasy; and from whom, tho' he knew she had given herself to another, his heart, his honour, nor his love had ever strayed. He trembled with agony, with joy, with grief;—he was not able to bear the precious burthen to a chair—he wanted support himself.

"It is my dear Lady Denningcourt!" cried Rosa, flying to her, while Lady Gauntlet, assisted by the people who followed, carried her near the air.

"Oh Elinor! dear Elinor!" said the General in a trembling voice, the salt rheum flowing down his cheeks,—"It is she!—it is herself;—her voice, like the last awful summons, would raise my soul from the dust.—Oh ever lovely and beloved, sweet partner of my fond heart! what fate, what incident has once more blest my sight with her angelic form!—revive, my Elinor, revive!—She hears me not!—my soul melts in tenderness at sight of her—it annihilates time and space;—it is no longer the battered, sickly, way-worn soldier; no longer the wretched, banished exile,—but the happy Wallace Buhanun adoring his own Elinor in the wood of Athelane!—But she, Oh God! she remembers me as the murderer of her brother!—as a wretch, who revives from death to interrupt her felicity!—to dishonour her with prior claims!—Oh my Elinor! fear it not—I can easier die to seal thy peace, than live to blast it."

"Ye

“Ye fal nae du ain nor tither, an ye wull herken tull your eild frind Moggy M'Laurin,” cried the old dame, walking forward in a stately pace, with Mrs. J. Croak on one hand, and Mrs. Garnet on the other.

“She recovers! she breathes! amiable, dear Lady Denningcourt!—See Sir!—”

In raising her eyes for the first moment from Lady Denningcourt, Rosa beheld Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin and her two supporters.—

“Oh!” she shrieked, flying with an involuntary motion towards her, “Elinor!” but she instantly recoiled; her eyes met the emaciated, yet unwieldy form, panting for breath, and the hollow jaundiced eye of Mrs. Garnet.

All the ignominy of her origin; the inebriety of her mother, and the vulgarity of her step-father, at once struck on her memory;—what connections, what relatives were those to introduce to the noble owners of the mansion—to acknowledge in the face of their domestics.

Lady Denningcourt had not yet recovered her senses. Lady Gauntlet, attentive only to her, did not observe, and therefore could not feel the cruel embarrassment of Rosa's mind;—Lord Gauntlet was observing what passed with eager attention,—and she even fancied a coldness in his astonished glance.

Mrs. Croak, with down-cast eyes, stood transfixed to one spot; she made no effort to speak or move.

Rosa, bewildered, humbled and discouraged, again fixed her eyes on Mrs. Garnet, who had moved round Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, near to Mrs. Croak.

“My child!” she murmured, “my dear Rosa!”

Rosa's face changed in a moment from pale to scarlet:—This mother then knew her;—she was come to claim her maternal right;—oh! where should she hide the disgrace;—yet, had she not been kind to her!—had she not offered her a home! nay, had there not been times when that home appeared to be her only resource!—Oh why then this unnatural, this unconquerable repugnance!—Again she met the hollow glance of this mother's eye; a tear trembled in it; Mr. Garnet with his dark coat, red plush waistcoat,

lank hair, fringed cravat and large round hat, stepped forward to wipe it off,—to hold volatiles to her nostrils, and to say,—“ Take comfort, Rosy ; thee beest a great sinner, Rosebud, but there is joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth ; thee shan’t want for nothing living nor dead ; thy girl shall share my sinners with little Phill.”

“ Oh God !” cried Rosa, retreating towards where Lady Denningcourt was reviving, and hiding her face with both her hands,—“ Oh God ! my mother !”

“ Yes, Rosa, yes, yes, yes,” cried Lady Denningcourt, folding her languid arms round her, “ I am thy mother,—thy very mother !—come to my heart, oh thou child of instinct, of love ! how has my soul doated on thee present, and languished for thee absent !—how has my vital blood acknowledged thee !—oh was that a form, a face, a mind to be exposed to the angry elements ! and was my only child sent to beg a scanty morsel, while thy mother was decked in splendour ! oh my brave brother ! gallant noble Dungaron ! dear broken-hearted fainted mother, and thou inexorable father, did ye behold my child,—my innocent, beautiful child, the rightful heir of all your riches left to beg her bread from the niggard hand of common charity !—did ye behold this !—and are your angry spirits not glutted with vengeance !

“ Oh Wallace ! how has grief and remorse changed us both since last we parted ; but my soul would not dare to greet thine, had I not such a mediatrix,—behold her, Wallace, my child and thine !—why does the hope of my life tremble ? dearest girl, no longer Rosa, but Elinor.”

Rosa did indeed tremble ; her respiration became difficult ;—amazement chained every tongue most interested in this strange scene ; the General, scarce daring to trust his senses, seated Rosa on a sofa by Lady Denningcourt, and without a quiet nerve himself, whispered her to be composed.

Rosa glanced fearfully at Mrs. Garnet, by whose side Mrs. J. Croak still stood, tears deluging the cheeks of the latter, while all the defeatures of guilt, in strong perspiration, stood on the brow of the former.

“ Yes,

"Yes, my child, once more look at that bad woman, and that innocent impostor;—it is the peculiar trait of thy noble blood to forgive;—I trust I do forgive them, but they are obnoxious to my sight."

Mrs. J. Croak rushed forward prostrate at our heroine's feet; "Oh!" she cried, "pardon, pardon my mother! I do not ask you to forgive me,—you know I am innocent; even my nature, ignorant as I was of fraud, is innocent,—I felt I was indeed an impostor."

Mrs. Garnet, who was in a dropsy, from a complication of disorders, had moved forward, and with the assistance of her husband, kneeled by her daughter;—little Phill remembering his old favourite, though he dared not claim acquaintance, also ran forward, and put up his little hands,—“Pray do forgive mammy,” he cried, “she is your *namesake*.”

“Rosa, all amazement, knew not what to believe; yet it was a solid truth, that she was clasped by turn in the arms of her patroness and in those of her patron; she heard herself addressed by the most endearing epithets; the tears of the General and Lady Denningcourt blended with her own; she saw the most amiable of women, throw herself suddenly on her knees; heard her adjure the Général to join her in wonder, adoration, and thanks to that God which guided his sad wanderings to Penry; that opened his heart to the misery of his own and only child;—she beheld the anxious surprise in the fine countenance of Lady Gauntlet, and met the tender gaze of fond solicitude from her son; all this real,—yet how could it be? how could she who had so often felt the bitter pang of shame, for a parent's vices, who so clearly remembered the beggary from which she was relieved,—how could she believe herself the beloved child of one of the first, as well as best of women?—of her kind patron and benefactor?”

But in the meanwhile her friend, her juvenile companion, was humbled to the earth before her; the woman, who, though she had been cruelly abandoned by her, she had considered as her mother, was in a dying state, yet kneeling, weeping, and begging pardon;—she looked at Lady Denningcourt; all the soul of ma-

ternal tenderness was in her eyes,—all the energy of fond affection in her embrace: “Yes, Rosa, I comprehend the interesting expression of your eye,—you *are mine*,—Wallace Buhanun, him in whose praise I have delighted to hear you eloquent; he is your father;—compose yourself, we will have no secrets.”

“That you are mine, Rosa, I need no proof,” said the General; “your resemblance to this your noble mother, and the sound of your voice, so familiar and so precious to my auricular faculties, first attracted and then rivetted my regard; yes, I *know*, I *feel* you are mine; but if we are to pardon this poor wretch, whom I perfectly remember, let us do it like ourselves,—you see her situation.”

Lady Denningcourt had seen her child,—seen the dear and natural resemblance of her Wallace accounted for, and she saw nothing else; but Mrs. Garnet was now not only lifted up, but seated on an arm chair, with her head resting on Mrs. Croak’s bosom.

“I cannot help thinking this is all an agreeable vision,” cried Lady Gauntlet,—and though it was very seldom that lady was mistaken, yet it did happen just now,—for there was neither enchantment, nor (any more than in the General’s story) any thing unprecedented in the mystery Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin stepped forward, with great solemnity, to elucidate.

It will be seen, on recurring to the eighth chapter of the third volume of this famous story, that Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin hinted to the nurse who brought Elinor’s child to meet her at the milk-house, that the mother of her charge had “mickle filler;” that ten golden guineas confirmed the assertion, and that Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin explained the merke under the bairn’s herte, to be of her ain doing with gunpooder.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins were unfortunately both of them fond of liquor, and when things, as the poor penitent now confessed, were going to rack and ruin, then it was that she studied the process of marking with gunpowder. But though she succeeded tolerably in the A B, she was obliged to make a splash, as if the outlines of the coronet had run together, for that was a sort of mark it was not so easy to imitate; though the
fraud

fraud was successful—though she substituted her own child for the neglected infant whose “mither had sae mickle filler,” without suspicion—and though she saw it dressed and educated like a gentlewoman, she never knew a moment’s peace after parting with her own child; her unfortunate propensity to drinking increased; her husband the confidant of her iniquity was idle; instead of feeling compassion for the child they were so deeply injuring, every word she learned to speak, even her little wants reproached and provoked them,—and it was not merely starving but ill usage she suffered, till Providence threw her on the charity of her own father.

Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin declared that et wes the haundee woork of the Lorde thaut put et entull her hede tull tauk abooten Mefs Rosa, tull the gude weef, Maistress Broon, wha teld her aw aboot a merke of a croon and twa letters, aun when she looked at et her sel, aun foond her ain merke, efter hauving allood the merke on the tother lassie,—gude Lorde! she were leek tull dee, an culd nae reste neet nore day, tull she ganged tull the sooth, tuil Doctor Croak, wha ganged alang we her tull ain Maistress Garnet, who, pure bodie, was unco seek.

The truth was, Mrs. Garnet had made so many journies to Penry, under pretence of consulting the Doctor on her illness, but in fact to appease her conscience by a discovery of her guilt, that he suspected the truth before Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin appeared; and as his daughter-in-law had testified an insuperable dislike to him at the same time she was conferring all sorts of benefits on his brother; he, who knew no joy equal to revenge, was as eager to convince her she was the daughter of a beggar, as he had before been humble to Rosa.

Mrs. Garnet made an unreserved confession, and, as the least atonement for her guilt, readily agreed to accompany Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin and her daughter, of whom she grew doatingly fond, to Cumberland;—and thus ends the history of the Beggar,—for the acknowledged daughter of so rich a father and mother, and the affianced bride of an Earl, can no longer be

considered in that light, and it is scarce necessary to say, that a double union took place at Delworth,—the same hour that gave the lovely daughter of General Buhanun to the enraptured Earl of Gauntlet, witnessed the re-union of her parents.

The clothes, equipage, company, presentations, and all the long etceteras of splendid marriages, would very decently add another chapter to this history, if it were not already too long.

The young lady readers are therefore at liberty to deck the fair bride in what clothes and jewels they please; they may give to the Earl all the raptures the most warm imagination can fancy; they may excite the admiration of one part of the world, and the envy of the other to any excess; they may feed the hungry, cloath the naked, visit the sick, relieve the prisoner in a manner more feeling and generous than ever was done before, and be certain they cannot over-rate the magnificence, the tenderness, the popularity, or the charity of the Earl and Countess of Gauntlet; but having left these important articles to the fancy of the young reader, the author concludes her history by a brief disposal of the other conspicuous characters.

Mrs. Croak, the foster sister of the heroine, still possesses her warm affection; and after having seen the remains of her mother, who died at Delworth, decently interred, she returned to her own farm, with more riches than her husband or herself desired, and far more happy than she could have been at Athelane, though married to its heir.

Lady Denningcourt *did know* Wallace Buhanun; her last act previous to her re-union with him was an unreserved renunciation of all the property she possessed from the deceased Earl of Denningcourt in favour of his son, not even excepting the Jointure-house.

The Earl of Denningcourt's marriage had taken place before this acquisition of fortune; and as he immediately set off with his bride on a tour to Italy, it was never suspected about Denningcourt that the beautiful young Countess was the former mistress at the castle; and it is, we hope, needless to add, that a constant harmony subsisted between the two neighbouring Mills and their families.

Admiral

Admiral Herbert died the following year, full of years, peace, and honour, in the arms of his grandson and heir. Captain Seagrove, from the hour of his demise, became part of the Dowager Lady Gauntlet's establishment, who, though possessor of the Grange during her life and a constant summer visitor at her son's and Lady Elinor Buhanun's, fixed her home at Bath, on account of some spasms in her stomach, for which the waters were prescribed; and there meeting Mrs. Harley, she was so pleased with her lady-like manners and true goodness of heart, that an invitation, which coming from the noble Magdalena, must have been made with dignified sincerity, was accepted by that worthy woman: she still lives with the Dowager Countess of Gauntlet, and has every year the pleasure to witness with her the felicity of her beloved pupil—not, however, without feeling an equal interest in the more humble happiness of Mrs. J. Croak.

General Buhanun purchased the fine estate of Castle Lowder, in the neighbourhood of Lady Hopely, of the Earl of that name; and as he, with his amiable Elinor, made their native country their home, there really did appear no end of Betty's sufferens; for, besides, that John Brown, never so entirely dismounted from the high ropes as to forget how sick his yellow face made *some folk*, she was either obliged to live in that devilditch place Skutlun, or never have an ouse of her own; for John protested, that as God left *him* when he left his master, with whom he was always safe and happy, he never—no, never would be parted from him again.

The General's eye filled with the soft rheum; he made John Brown his steward; and as there was annexed to this important office a pretty genteel *ouse*, not among the *riff raff*, between settling of fashions, displaying her knowledge of high life and visiting, Mrs. Brown contrives to exist with a tolerable degree of comfort, for though an extraordinary glass of ale does sometimes bring up former sufferens, as John is a poor ignorant man, he don't mind it no more nor nothen.

Mrs. Buhanun grew again into importance, after her daughter became a Countess; Mr. Frazer resumed his

his former servility, and might have yet been a great gainer by his adventure in matrimony, had he not unfortunately been honoured with the title of father, by the one dirty female domestic he had kept at Castle Gowrand.

Mrs. Buhanun laughed at the affair; divorced her husband, and now lives at Castle Gowrand with her beautiful Jessy, wifer, and of course more respected, than ever.

Emma Buhanun, whom Rosa sent for to Delworth, recovered her health; and being introduced to the Athelane family, the disappointment and desperation of the despairing Angus, was so terrific, that within a few months, he, to the great annoyance of all the young ladies of his own clan, made a Buhanun the future Duchess of Athelane, with the full approbation of that respectable nobleman, the Duke his uncle, with whom they now reside.

Doctor Cameron is still the noblest work of God, "an honest man," and he is also the most esteemed character of the world, "a rich one."

Mr. Steward has an appointment in the revenue, of considerable profit, besides his paternal inheritance.

Mrs. Moggy is returned to her ain wee hoose, tull tele aw her frinds the muckle sarvice she did the clan of Athelane.

Lord Lowder had every possible disposition to divorce his wife, but the lady had only been convicted of *one faux pas*, whereas she could recriminate many on his Lordship, so the handsome Sir Jacob, after losing all his bets escaped to his mother, without being quite done up by heavy damages for crim. con. so much wiser and better for his experience, that he totally discarded the Reverend Mr. Jolter, and married the sixth pretty daughter of the Rector of his own parish, by whom he has a large family of fine children; while the Countess spends the income her lord cannot help allowing her, on whatever pretty fellow happens to strike her fancy; it is true, that by these indulgences she has now lost her beauty, her voice, and her health—but she will live all the days of her short life, notwithstanding—if *she can*.

The

The once beautiful Countess of Gauntlet, she who so lately was adored by the men, and hated by the women, could not support existence in an obscure part of Switzerland, without the aid of strong cordials, which, from renovators of her low spirits, became by excessive use, rapid poison; she died unlamented by her own family.

The ci-devant Earl, with his daughters, and daughter-in-law, live abroad together on a handsome pension from the Earl, his injured nephew.

If any thing could put a young major of the guards out of countenance, Major Montreville must have blushed at the family anecdotes in public circulation; but as that is a thing totally out of nature, the major may be heard of as a prodigious dasher at most of the gambling-houses and brothels about town.

Mrs. Woudbe has, by dint of her own assurance and her husband's credulity, got over the debts and the jewels, and threatens the town with a masquerade-ball, which will out-do all her former out-doings; but as she is at this time deeply enamoured of a young actor, as vain and ridiculous as herself, it is expected Mr. Woudbe must at last be reduced to the necessity of turning his wife shiftless out of doors.

Sir Solomon Mushroom dying intestate, and Mrs. Dorothy Wright having, by her premature visit, proved the illegitimacy of the two heiresses, Lady Mushroom would have taken quiet possession of his fortune, with the thirds of which she would have been content; but the irascible Dolly got a caveat entered against the letters of administration, and by dint of labour and perseverance, at length discovered the next of kin to the late Solomon, in a cellar at St. Giles's.

Mr. Lemuel Supple undertook to see these poor people righted: and accordingly, after disputing the legality of Lady Mushroom's unconsummated marriage; after moving it from court to court, making giants, and then destroying them, he threw the whole business into chancery, and the probability is, that Mushroom-Place will, at some future period, be again sold under a decree of that court to pay costs

Lady

Lady Mushroom had however wisely taken care of as many valuable trifles as, when sold, added such comfort to her income, that having also the wisdom to retire to her house at Penry, enabled her to support her new rank in that village ; and as she is known to be acquainted with three Countesses, and Honourables innumerable, nothing can be more the thing than her *Ladyship at Penry*.

Dr. Croak's practice falling quite off, as his chronic diseases encreased, Madam Bawsky began to think of her *conscience*, and having consulted her friend Mary the Buxom on the business, it was agreed, *nem. con.* that though it might be very pleasant to manage a country apothecary's house, beat his old mother, and banish all his relations, while he could keep a carriage, and pay and receive visits from the quality of Penry ; yet that to live with a *poor* gouty old fellow, who could do neither one nor the other, was more suitable to an old garden woman, than a person of Mrs. Bawsky's refined ideas ; she accordingly made certain propositions to her husband, which being rejected, she accepted the invitation of her friend, to live with her ; and those amiable women, Mrs. Waltringham and Madam Bawsky, are united by such a congeniality of soul, that to this hour, they are laughed at, despised and visited by all the quality of Penry ; while the poor Doctor, glad now to recognize his relations, is boarded by his son with his good sister-in-law, whose philanthropy, happily for him, is unconquerable.

Madam La Croix is still in vast request among the higher orders of people who deal with French milliners, and sometimes carries a young friend to Lord Aaron Horsmagog's country villa, where that nobleman, in spite of debility and grey hairs, continues to be as amusing as ever.

F I N I S.



